United Nations A/56/491

General Assembly

Distr.: General
22 October 2001

Original: English

Fifty-sixth session
Agenda item 88
Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Note by the Secretary-General*

1. The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the thirty-third report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 55/130 of 8 December 2000.

2. This report should be considered together with the Special Committee's periodic reports (A/56/428 and Add.1).

* In accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/222, part III, paragraph 10, this report is being submitted on 17 October 2001 so as to include as much updated information as possible.

01-59425 (E) 011101

Contents

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	Introduction	1–3	3
II.	Mandate	4–12	3
	A. General background	4–9	3
	B. General Assembly resolution 55/130 of 8 December 2000	10	4
	C. Reports of the Special Committee	11–12	4
III.	Organization of work	13–27	4
	A. Meetings	13–21	4
	B. Exchanges with other United Nations bodies	22–24	6
	C. Other matters	25–27	6
IV.	Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem	28–93	6
	A. Closures, curfews and other restrictions on the movement of persons, vehicles and goods	38–39	8
	B. Destruction of property, land and housing	40–45	10
	C. Settlements and settlers	46–52	11
	D. Use of disproportionate force	53–55	13
	E. Method of arrest, administrative detention, methods of interrogation, visits from family and relatives, and conditions of imprisonment	56–70	15
	F. Overall consequences of such a manner of occupation	71–72	20
	G. The continuing difficulty of Palestinians in East Jerusalem	73–90	23
	H. The special difficulties of the Palestinians in refugee camps	91–93	25
V.	Occupied Syrian Golan	94	26
VI.	Conclusions	95–104	51

I. Introduction

1. The Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories was established by the General Assembly by its resolution 2443 (XXIII) of 19 December 1968.

2. The Special Committee is composed of three Member States: Malaysia (represented by the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations, Hasmy Agam), Senegal (represented by the Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations Office at Geneva, Absa Claude Diallo) and Sri Lanka (represented by the Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations, John de Saram, serving as Chairperson).

3. The Special Committee reports to the Secretary-General. The reports of the Special Committee are considered in the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) of the General Assembly.

II. Mandate

A. General background

4. The General Assembly, in its resolution 2443 (XXIII) of 19 December 1968, entitled "Respect for and implementation of human rights in occupied territories", decided to establish a Special Committee, composed of three Member States, to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories.

5. The General Assembly, in its resolution 44/48 A of 8 December 1989, decided to change the name of the Special Committee to Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories.

6. The mandate of the Special Committee, as set out in resolution 2443 (XXIII) and subsequent resolutions, was to investigate Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the population of the occupied territories.

7. The Special Committee has proceeded on the basis that:

(a) For the purposes of the present report, the territories considered occupied territories are those remaining under Israeli occupation, namely, the occupied Syrian Arab Golan, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip;

(b) The persons covered by resolution 2443 (XXIII) and therefore the subject of the investigation of the Special Committee, were the civilian population residing in the areas occupied as a result of the hostilities of June 1967 and those persons normally resident in the areas that were under occupation but who had left those areas because of the hostilities;

(c) The "human rights" of the population of the occupied territories consist of two elements, namely, those rights which the Security Council referred to as "essential and inalienable human rights" in its resolution 237 (1967) of 14 June 1967 and, secondly, those rights which found their basis in the protection afforded by international law in particular circumstances such as military occupation and, in the case of prisoners of war, capture. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 3005 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972, the Special Committee was required to investigate allegations concerning the exploitation and the looting of the resources of the occupied territories, the pillaging of the archaeological and cultural heritage of the occupied territories and interference in the freedom of worship in the Holy Places of the occupied territories;

(d) The "policies" and "practices" affecting human rights that come within the scope of investigation by the Special Committee refer, in the case of "policies", to any course of action consciously adopted and pursued by the Government of Israel as part of its declared or undeclared intent; while "practices" refers to those actions which, irrespective of whether or not they were in implementation of a policy, reflect a pattern of behaviour on the part of the Israeli authorities towards the civilian population in the occupied areas;

(e) The geographical names and the terminology employed in the present report reflect the usage in the original source and do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Special Committee or the Secretariat of the United Nations.

8. The Special Committee has, in determining human rights standards and obligations, relied principally on the following:

(a) The Charter of the United Nations;

(b) The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, of 10 December 1948;[1]

(c) The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, of 16 December 1966;[2]

(d) The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, of 16 December 1966;[2]

(e) The (Fourth) Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949;[3]

(f) The Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, of 12 August 1949;[4]

(g) The Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, of 14 May 1954;[5]

(h) The Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land.[6]

9. The Special Committee has also relied on those resolutions relevant to the situation of civilians in the occupied territories adopted by United Nations organs — the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Human Rights.

B. General Assembly resolution 55/130 of 8 December 2000

10. The General Assembly, in its resolution 55/130 of 8 December 2000:

> "5. *Requests* the Special Committee, pending complete termination of the Israeli occupation, to continue to investigate Israeli policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, especially Israeli lack of compliance with the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, to consult, as appropriate, with the International Committee of the Red Cross according to its regulations in order to ensure that the welfare and human rights of the peoples of the occupied territories are safeguarded, and to report to the Secretary-General as soon as possible and whenever the need arises thereafter;
>
> "6. *Also requests* the Special Committee to submit regularly to the Secretary-General periodic reports on the current situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem;
>
> "7. *Further requests* the Special Committee to continue to investigate the treatment of prisoners in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967".

C. Reports of the Special Committee

11. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 55/130, in 2001 the Special Committee submitted a first periodic report, relating to the period from 1 August 2000 to 30 April 2001 (A/56/428), and a second periodic report, relating to the period from 1 May to 31 July 2001 (A/56/428/Add.1).

12. The present report for the year 2001 is also submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 55/130.

III. Organization of work

A. Meetings

13. The Special Committee met in Geneva on 17 and 18 May 2001 to consider its programme and organization of work for 2001. The Special Committee met with and was addressed by a representative of the International Labour Organization knowledgeable as to conditions in the occupied territories. The Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations Office at Geneva and the Permanent Observer of the Palestinian Authority to the United Nations Office at Geneva also met with and addressed the Special Committee. On 17 and 18 May 2001, the Special Committee considered and adopted its first periodic report to the Secretary-General (A/56/428).

14. The Special Committee has not, since its establishment in 1968, had access to the occupied territories. As in previous years, in a letter addressed to

the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations Office at Geneva, copied to the Secretary-General, the Special Committee requested that it be given access to the occupied territories. There was no response to the letter.

15. As in previous years, in order that the Special Committee might meet with and hear statements from persons with personal knowledge of the occupied territories, the Special Committee convened in Cairo from 26 to 29 July, in Amman from 30 July to 1 August, and in Damascus from 2 to 4 August. The Special Committee wishes to express its deep appreciation for the cooperation it received from the Governments of Egypt, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic.

16. In Cairo (26-29 July), the Special Committee met with the Assistant Minister for Multilateral Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and also received statements under oath of persons with personal knowledge of East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza.

17. Because of time constraints and problems of scheduling, the Special Committee was unable to meet with the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States or his representatives as it had done in previous years.

18. In Amman (30 July-1 August), the Special Committee met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Jordan and also received the testimony of persons from Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza.

19. In Damascus (1-4 August), the Special Committee met with the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and received a report from the Director for International Organizations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who also addressed the Special Committee. Statements under oath of eight Palestinians residing in a refugee camp in the vicinity of Damascus, who had been in Israeli imprisonment and expressed a wish to make statements to the Special Committee, were also received by the Special Committee in Damascus. The Special Committee visited Quneitra Province, bordering the occupied Syrian Arab Golan, and met with the Governor of Quneitra and also heard statements under oath in Quneitra of persons with personal knowledge of the occupied Syrian Arab Golan.

20. A total of 20 witnesses, including a number of Israeli Arab and Jewish witnesses, out of an aggregate of 33 scheduled witnesses whose attendance had previously been confirmed, were heard by the Special Committee. While the Special Committee was in the region, from 26 July to 4 August, there were a number of incidents of great violence in the occupied territories. It is the understanding of the Special Committee that difficulties created by the high tensions within the occupied territories and severe restrictions on movement within and out of the occupied territories prevented the attendance of other witnesses, as had been previously arranged.

21. The materials and testimony considered by the Special Committee included the following:

- Testimony and documentary materials provided by persons knowledgeable as to the occupied territories;
- Testimony provided under oath and recorded by United Nations verbatim reporters. These materials are available for consultation;
- Various documentary materials;
- Written materials received from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic;
- Articles appearing in *The Jerusalem Post*, *Ha'aretz* and *The Jerusalem Times* in 2000 and 2001;
- Report of the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator entitled "The impact on the Palestinian economy of confrontations, mobility restrictions and border closures", covering the period from 1 October to 31 January 2001;
- Report dated 29 November 2001 of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on her visit, at the request of the Commission on Human Rights at its special session (17-19 October 2000), to the occupied Palestinian territories, Israel, Egypt and Jordan;
- Report dated 16 March 2001 of the Human Rights Inquiry Commission, established by the Commission on Human Rights at its special session (17-19 October 2000), to investigate violations of human rights and humanitarian law in the occupied Palestinian territories after 28 September 2000.

B. Exchanges with other United Nations bodies

22. The Special Committee considers it necessary to note, as it also did in its report last year and the year before, that when a United Nations body, such as the Special Committee, undertakes a mission to the field, it is mutually beneficial and necessary that there should be exchanges of views with United Nations bodies with knowledge of relevant matters, the work of the Special Committee being part of the totality of a United Nations endeavour.

23. The Special Committee wishes to record with appreciation the helpful cooperation extended, as in the past, to the Special Committee by the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator for the Syrian Arab Republic.

24. The Special Committee also wishes to record its appreciation of the readiness expressed by the United Nations Department of Public Information to be of assistance to the Special Committee whenever requested.

C. Other matters

25. The Special Committee recognizes that because of lack of access to the occupied territories its report to the General Assembly is limited by its inability to observe directly the conditions of the lives of the Palestinians and other Arabs of the occupied territories and to receive the views of representatives of the occupying authority.

26. Nonetheless, notwithstanding such limitations, the Special Committee has sought to convey to the General Assembly in its report what the Special Committee understands to be the conditions affecting human rights in the occupied territories.

27. The information provided to the Special Committee from documentary material and oral testimony was considerable. Where oral testimony was provided, a record of the oral testimony was maintained by United Nations verbatim reporters and is available for consultation.

IV. Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem

28. The Oslo Accords (Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, signed on 13 September 1993 (A/48/486-S/26560, annex) and the related instruments) divided the West Bank into three areas (A, B and C) with civil and security responsibilities allocated, in ways specified in the Oslo Accords, to Israel and the Palestinian Authority, generally as follows: in Area A, the Palestinian Authority was to have full control; in Area B, Israel was to retain security control; and in Area C, Israel was to have exclusive control.

29. The Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, applies to Israel as the "occupying Power", in terms of the Convention. The High Contracting Parties, at a Conference convened in Geneva on 15 July 1999, reaffirmed the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the occupied territories. A number of persons appearing before the Special Committee expressed the view that it is important that the international community pursue with the Government of Switzerland, as depositary of the Convention, the convening of a substantial conference on measures to enforce the Convention in occupied Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

30. The Special Committee, in its earlier reports to the General Assembly, including its report at the previous session (A/55/453, paras. 38-107), has sought to convey to the General Assembly the elaborate and extensive nature of the systems of control the Israeli authorities have established in the occupied territories through, for example, such measures as restrictions on the movement of persons, vehicles and goods; confiscation of lands; the establishment of new settlements and the expansion of existing ones; restrictions on the construction or expansion of houses and other buildings; demolition of housing; severe restrictions on access to water; administrative detentions; conditions of imprisonment; use of unjustifiable force; and curtailment of access to Israel by Palestinian workers dependent on employment in Israel.

31. The Special Committee had, in the paragraphs set out below of its report to the General Assembly at the previous session (A/55/453), expressed some of its

understandings as to conditions relevant to human rights in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem:

> "127. The Special Committee takes cognizance of the position enunciated in the sixth preambular paragraph of General Assembly resolution 54/76, and in earlier resolutions of the Assembly, that occupation itself represents a gross human rights violation.
>
> "128. The Special Committee believes that the observations made in September 1999 in paragraphs 251 to 265 of its report (A/54/325) continue to be valid, and reaffirms those observations once again, in paragraphs 129 to 144 below, based on and reinforced by additional information obtained by the Special Committee during its visit to the region.
>
> "129. The Israeli authorities have put in place a comprehensive and elaborate system of laws and regulations and administrative measures that affect all aspects of the lives of the Palestinian and Syrian peoples in the occupied territories. The laws and regulations are so framed that they vest in officials a considerable degree of authority and latitude over the lives of the people of the occupied territories.
>
> "130. These laws and regulations are designed to enhance the exercise of its control over the occupied territories and their population.
>
> "131. There exists an all-encompassing sense of great tension in the occupied territories, in particular during periods of crisis, and the rigorous implementation of laws and regulations and administrative measures creates a sense of fear and despondency among the inhabitants of the territories.
>
> "132. Moreover, during periods of violence, such exercise of control makes the lives of the Palestinian and Syrian peoples in the occupied territories even more unbearable.
>
> "133. Bitterness at their treatment by the authorities and the sense of dispossession, hopelessness and despair of the people of the occupied territories caused to a large extent, it seems to the Special Committee, by lack of progress in the peace process and a lack of tangible benefits for the people of the occupied territories, make the situation in those territories one of the greatest urgency."

The Special Committee considers such observations to be still valid.

32. The Special Committee, had also, in its report to the General Assembly at the previous session (A/55/453), described the general conditions prevailing in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem, immediately prior to 29 September 2000, in the following terms:

> "32. A principal and recurring theme in the presentations made to the Special Committee was that the finalization of the peace process in a manner satisfactory to all concerned is, now more than ever before, of overwhelming importance.
>
> "33. The frustrations, tensions and often great anger of the people of the occupied territories, under the oppressiveness of an occupation that has continued for so long, was referred to by nearly all those who appeared as witnesses before the Special Committee. They spoke of the fact that there has been little or no relief from the pressures of continuous occupation, revealing a very unsatisfactory condition with respect to human rights.
>
> "34. On Friday, 29 September 2000, shortly before the final meeting of the Special Committee in New York for the adoption of the present report, violent disturbances, resulting in great loss of life and injuries, erupted at the Holy Places in East Jerusalem, spreading to the occupied territories of the West Bank, Gaza and also to several Arab townships in Israel."

33. Since 29 September 2000, tensions in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem have been greatly heightened. The Israeli authorities have enforced their systems of control with extraordinary intensity and severity. There have been hostile confrontations, almost daily, between Israeli forces and the Palestinians. The Special Committee was informed that conditions have been exacerbated to the extreme because of the use by Israeli authorities of greatly disproportionate force. The toll of dead and injured is rising, with the Palestinians suffering by far the greater casualties. Closures of entry into and out of the West Bank and Gaza; internal closures of the borders of areas A, B, and C; numerous checkpoints; and

restrictions on movement out of towns and villages have resulted in a situation that has been described repeatedly to the Special Committee as a "state of siege". This "state of siege" made even more desperate in areas where curfews are imposed.

34. The Special Committee has sought in sections A to H below, on the basis of information it has received, to convey to the General Assembly an overall sense of the conditions relating to human rights in the occupied territories.

35. It seemed important to the Special Committee that the General Assembly should be apprised, at least to some degree, in the words of the witnesses themselves of the very difficult circumstances in which the Palestinians currently find themselves, particularly after 29 September 2000. It is for that reason that the Special Committee has in sections A to H below included, from the very substantial materials provided to the Special Committee, a few extracts from, or summaries of, passages of statements made by witnesses to the Special Committee. The extracts of summaries are, of course, neither exhaustive nor adequately representative of the various statements made to the Special Committee. The extracts and summaries refer to such matters as: (a) controls imposed over the movement of persons, vehicles and goods; (b) the extensive destruction of houses and property; (c) the difficulties caused by settlements and settlers; (d) the use of disproportionate force; (e) methods of arrest, administrative detention, methods of interrogation, visits from lawyers and relatives, and conditions of imprisonment; (f) the overall consequences of such a manner of occupation; (g) the continuing difficulties of the Palestinians in East Jerusalem; and (h) the special difficulties of the Palestinians in refugee camps.

36. The extracts of summaries set out below are in no way exhaustive. They were taken from statements made to the Special Committee in the course of its field mission by witnesses whose reliability the Special Committee has no reason to question. (As noted above, statements made to the Special Committee were recorded verbatim by United Nations Verbatim Reporters and are available for consultation.)

37. The consequences of such systems of control on Palestinian life as a whole within Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem have been catastrophic, with grave consequences for the economic and social, cultural and political, and other aspects of Palestinian life in the occupied territories.

A. Closures, curfews and other restrictions on the movement of persons, vehicles and goods

38. Severe restrictions have applied, since 29 September 2000, on the movement of persons, vehicles and goods into and out of as well as within the occupied territories. The only Palestinian airport in the occupied territories, in Gaza, has been closed. International and border crossings to Jordan and Egypt have been closed for extended periods of time. There is no "safe passage" between Gaza and the West Bank. Travel into and out of nearly every town and village has been shut down or heavily obstructed by Israeli authorities. Numerous checkpoints have been established. Curfews have been imposed that confine those Palestinians within the scope of the curfew to their houses for substantial periods of time. The expression "state of siege" was used by a number of witnesses before the Special Committee to describe the traumatic conditions currently prevailing.

39. The following are extracts from, or summaries of, passages in statements made to the Special Committee. They concern some of the matters brought to the attention of the Special Committee in the course of its field mission, by witnesses whose reliability the Special Committee has no reason to question.

> (a) "I do not think any members of the Committee can imagine what it means to wait for three hours in the sweltering sun. People who live in Geneva or other cities may have rush-hour problems ..."

> (b) "Generally, crossing begins at 9 a.m. I arrived at the crossing point at 6.30 a.m. I waited in the car until 9.30 a.m. to be able to enter the crossing point. That was after coming from Gaza City by way of a taxi and then waiting for another car with authorization to cross issued by the occupying forces. They allow only a limited number to enter. I had to pay the drivers in advance for my seat. I succeeded in being among the first five cars that had been allowed in. I had left my house at 5.30 a.m. and I came out of the Israeli side of the crossing around 11.30 a.m., a total of six hours. I am not speaking about any

person in particular. I am a young man and can withstand the hardships of travel, but what about mothers, children? I have seen mothers carrying infants waiting under the heat of the sun, from 5.30 a.m. until as late as noon. I am talking about the area outside the crossing, where there is no roof. People wait in the sun; it is horrible, we are talking about hundreds of cars ... Within the border crossing there are no toilet facilities. There is a private cafeteria outside that is run by a Palestinian. It is usually full of people, but there are no public facilities. The crossing centre was not meant for people to wait. Usually people would just go inside to wait. But under the present situation, people are not allowed inside and before the second intifada the crossing point was open 24 hours daily; now it operates only six hours per day."

(c) "There are more than 20 stages that one passes through, not to be checked, but, it would seem, to humiliate travellers. Sometimes you find yourself going in circles for no reason. You leave the bus to take another bus, or you walk a few steps to take another car to take you a few metres. These measures are meant to terrify and humiliate people. No one could believe that these measures are related to inspection or security. At the main checkpoints we go through within Gaza and the bypass roads and at the borders there are a number of things that must be done to travel by car or bus: you leave the bus; you enter a car. All of this happens under duress; every few minutes, a weapon is pointed at you. As I said, these measures appear to be to humiliate people, not to check them. There are electronic devices and checks at all these stages. A person is asked to go through these electronic gates; even if he has already been inspected, he is inspected again."

(d) "... during this long trip, the problem is felt by people with children. Children need things more than adults do. There are restrooms but the problem is that there is no access to them. When you take the bus, you sometimes have to wait in the bus for an hour or two. But there are no toilets in the buses. The same is true with regard to food. There is food outside, but when we are waiting in a car or a bus, it is impossible to get food. That is the problem: things exist, but they are of no use to us."

(e) "My house is a few metres away from where shells are dropped from Israeli jets. The children are used to this ... It took 15 to 16 hours to come here (Cairo). There were more than 20 crossing points. We had to experience more than 25 stops before we got here. Sometimes it takes more time to get through the Gaza Strip than to go to Europe or other places. I left home at about 5.30 or 6 a.m. I left the border checkpoint at about 3.30 p.m. The measures were very stringent. Had I known this, I would not have come. On the Israeli side, you stand side by side facing the guns with your child, to prove that you are not carrying anything. This is behind cement blocks ... all you see is guns. You have to be fully aware of these dangers; you should not close your eyes; you should not look around; you should not move your hands; any movement could cost you your life. Many incidents have occurred on the pretext that somebody had approached a soldier or was thinking of stabbing a soldier. If you are travelling by car, you have to be aware of the language of signals and the way those signals are used."

(f) "Israel has imposed curfews on many Palestinian towns. I shall take up the curfew imposed in Hebron, as that town has experienced the largest number of curfews ... Since 8 October 2000, curfews have been imposed on Hebron for a total of over three months. This is particularly the case in the old town section of the city. Curfews are lifted for a few hours only on any given day. Sometimes, a curfew is not lifted at all. The curfew has had a very severe impact on education as schools were entirely closed and education had to take place inside homes. In 2001, curfews were imposed on Hebron from 1 to 27 February, 3 to 10 March and from 2 to 17 July. From 14 to 18 February and from 5 to 8 March, the curfew also applied to the camp located in the city itself. Curfews were also imposed on other towns, including Hawara and Surda in the area of Ramallah."

(g) "And the siege sort of ebbs and flows. When the Israelis are really mad, they tighten the siege. They even — at one point, at the beginning of June, after one of those bombs went off, they

were angry, so they tore up all the roads in and out of Bethlehem. They came with bulldozers and chopped the roads up and then they ploughed all the debris up to block the highway. This was, I think, a road funded by the World Bank that had just been resurfaced. They just chopped the whole thing up, gouged it, piled all the debris in the middle and then they dropped these big concrete barriers. Then they just sit there with their jeeps and say, 'Sorry, you can't go through, closed, siege' ... So you can imagine what this does for commerce. People with their trucks of produce or their raw materials can't go anywhere. How do you get fresh food in? And what about those villages that are completely dependent on outside water supplies? This is where the Red Cross has to mobilize, and they do. They are trying to bring in trucks, tankers of water, because these people are thirsty."

(h) "... Israel issued a military order ... declaring that the Gaza Strip was a closed military region, entry into and exit from which was banned until further notice. That order, along with further modifications, remained in effect during the period of relative calm when movement was allowed on an exceptional basis ... The closure that has been imposed is very strict. Israel directly controls the crossings as concerns not only Palestinians but also goods. Israel has completely closed the crossings during certain days and periods during the current intifada. It has banned the importation of necessities such as gasoline ... I own a car, and I faced this problem personally, since there wasn't a drop of gasoline at the Gaza gas station for 10 days. After this, the Israelis again allowed necessities to be imported."

B. Destruction of property, land and housing

40. In its earlier reports to the General Assembly, including its report at the previous session (A/55/453, paras. 46-58), the Special Committee has sought to convey to the Assembly the difficulties experienced by Palestinians of the occupied territories because of such matters as: the very restrictive policies and practices of the Israeli authorities regarding the construction of new Palestinian buildings and homes — or the expansion of existing structures — in the occupied territories; and Israeli authorizations necessary in that connection; the destruction of Palestinian buildings and homes where such authorizations have not been obtained; and the acquisition of land by Israeli authorities for the construction of access roads to settlements and bypass roads for settlement and other Israeli use. Such policies and practices continue.

41. Since 29 September 2000, and during the periods of heightened tension thereafter, the acquisition of Palestinian property (lands and housing) and the destruction of Palestinian property (lands and housing) for what was described as Israeli security considerations has intensified.

42. There has been substantial bulldozing, clearance and destruction of lands, properties, fruit trees and olive groves of considerable age in the vicinity of settlements and bypass roads and borders. Olive groves appear to have a special significance for the Palestinians. As explained to the Special Committee:

> "These have included olive trees, some more than a century old. For parents and children alike, these are sacred trees because they are a major source of income for Palestinian families. We visited one family in Abboud which had lost more than 200 olive trees that had been planted over the last 100 years. I feel that I have lost my grandfather, my father and my son."

43. There have been shellings and military-style incursions (with tanks, troops and bulldozers) into Palestinian residential areas or refugee camps and substantial destruction of Palestinian housing.

44. The extent of destruction of houses, farms and agricultural lands in areas close to settlements along borders has, the Special Committee was informed, been extensive. One witness informed the Special Committee that in Gaza, 245 houses, inhabited by 1,725 persons, including 810 children, had been destroyed since the beginning of the intifada. Another witness informed the Special Committee that land close to bypass roads had been cleared to a distance of between 50 and 250 metres.

45. The following are extracts from, or summaries of, passages in statements made to the Special Committee. They concern some of the matters brought to the attention of the Special Committee in the course of its field mission, by witnesses whose reliability the Committee has no reason to question.

(a) "The Israelis are creating a buffer zone between the Gaza Strip and the borders. Mostly, the buffer zone involves agricultural land. In the area of Rafah, in the southern part of the Gaza Strip, the area between the Palestinian Rafah and the Egyptian side is a residential and agricultural area. The Israelis first began by razing all the trees in the agricultural areas in the south-eastern part of the Gaza Strip. Then they moved to the other area, the residential area, where they demolished houses. Until today, people have been living in tents. There are also other areas which are treated in similar fashion."

(b) "Acts of destruction take place during the night and in some cases in the daytime. The areas to be destroyed are sealed off and journalists are prevented from approaching them. In some cases the areas are densely populated and some of the houses are owned by farmers. Shelling takes place prior to razing, in order to terrorize habitants and drive them off. Families are not given any opportunity to gather their belongings. They leave in a stampede as shelling is continuous and they run away leaving everything behind. Once the shelling is over, the bulldozers take over. Again this may take place during the night as well as in the daytime."

(c) "Bulldozing in the Gaza Strip has focused mainly on agricultural lands. Areas that have been subjected to bulldozing include those adjacent to the border between the Gaza Strip and Israel. It has been clear from the very beginning that Israel is seeking to create a buffer zone. This is being done at the expense of the territory of the Gaza Strip. It is not a question of a buffer zone on Israeli territories or of an equally divided buffer zone. Bulldozing also takes place in areas around the settlements of the Gaza Strip. In addition, buffer zones have also been created in the land adjacent to the bypass roads linking settlements. Agricultural land has been bulldozed. Scores, if not hundreds, of greenhouses have been destroyed. Wells and irrigation networks have also been destroyed, as have warehouses, agricultural equipment and farms."

(d) "Beginning in late September 2000, palm trees, olive trees, almond trees, vegetables, all kinds of trees have been totally uprooted. Bulldozing also includes farmhouses and chicken coops. I am talking about houses in agricultural areas that have been bulldozed. I am talking about the demolition of 147 houses in the areas that have been subjected to bulldozing ... From late September 2000 to the end of May 2001, 13,764 dunums of agricultural and wooded lands have been bulldozed. Agricultural land represents 88.3 per cent of all the land bulldozed, or about 12,155 dunums. Those lands had been planted with vegetables, greenhouses, fruit and palm trees. They uprooted everything except the palm trees, which were not entirely destroyed. We have reports from witnesses from the Rafah area who tell of seeing Israeli forces very gently uprooting palm trees and then carrying them off in trucks to Israel to be planted. All other trees were destroyed, but very old palm trees were carefully uprooted. To be honest, I did not see that, but we did receive reports from farmers in the Rafah area who saw soldiers with bulldozers in the Rafah area doing so."

(e) "There is a total of almost 167,000 dunums of agricultural land in the Gaza Strip ... The Israeli authorities have already destroyed almost 7.3 per cent of all agricultural land."

(f) "In Gaza alone, 9,216 dunums were bulldozed. A dunum is about 1,000 square metres. This land was utilized by 785 families. The number of people benefiting from this land was 7,830. There is an organized process to destroy property, uproot trees and destroy wells. All of these lands include a number of wells. The destruction of wells does not concern only the 9,216 dunums that were bulldozed. These wells irrigate larger areas, which have also been subject to drought because of the destruction of wells ... regarding the bulldozing of land ... instead of having borderlines; they are now trying to have clear lines. Instead of lines, we are now talking of zones, so the Israelis have destroyed most of the property there, whether it contains houses or just land. They have uprooted all the trees."

C. Settlements and settlers

46. As the Special Committee in its earlier reports, including its report of the previous session (A/55/453, paras. 62-65), has informed the General Assembly, relations between settlers in the West Bank and Gaza

and the Palestinians are of great sensitivity and tension reaching, at times of crises, very high levels of intensity and violence.

47. It is the understanding of the Special Committee that there are approximately 190 settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, inhabited by approximately 360,000 settlers. The settlements are scattered throughout the occupied territories, but as in the case of the city of Hebron, they are often located close to Palestinian areas of residence.

48. The system of bypass roads, enabling settlers and Israeli authorities to move quickly and safely through the West Bank, now extends to almost 400 kilometres of roads. The bypass roads prevent the expansion of Palestinian villages and the movement of commerce and workers from one Palestinian area to another. The construction of such roads required the taking of Palestinian land, often land under cultivation, and the demolition of homes.

49. Settlements and settlers are seen as being in a privileged position, to the disadvantage of Palestinians with respect to the location of settlements; the effects of settlements on surrounding lands; access to water; travel on bypass roads; and protection by Israeli security forces.

50. Difficulties are compounded considerably because of the violence between settlers and Palestinians, initiated on occasion by the settlers themselves. The principal function of Israeli forces in the West Bank and Gaza, the Special Committee was informed, is the protection of settlements and settlers.

51. Relations between settlers and the Palestinians continue to be a major source of discord.

52. The following are extracts from, or summaries of, passages in statements made to the Special Committee. They concern some of the matters brought to the attention of the Special Committee in the course of its field mission, by witnesses whose reliability the Special Committee has no reason to question.

(a) "The settlers, as is well known, constitute a major problem for all Palestinians. They have committed acts of violence against students ... in addition, Israeli settlers open fire every day against Palestinian civilians. This is particularly the case in the Psagot settlement in Mount Tawil near the city of Al-Bireh. Citizens in that region are exposed to shooting from settlers on a daily basis. On one occasion, such shooters were responsible for taking the life of a Palestinian mother of three children. One of the most frequent violations of settlers against Palestinians involves the occupying army's closure of principal roads linking Palestinian villages that are near Israeli settlements. Those roads are closed to Palestinians and can be used by settlers only. In addition to Israeli checkpoints, settlers have their own checkpoints to prevent Palestinians from moving between towns. That is in addition to the physical assaults faced by Palestinians on those roads. I would like to speak specifically about the city of Hebron, where there are daily clashes between settlers and Palestinians. An incident caused by settlers in the village of Idma near Hebron led to the death of three Palestinian citizens ... Using machine guns, settlers in another car opened fire on the Palestinians."

(b) "There are settlers who are living on Palestinian land at the expense of the development of the Palestinian economic sectors. What is happening in Hebron, for example, is that the crimes that are committed by settlers are not dealt with in the same way as if the perpetrators were Palestinians. The shootings, killings and other incidents by settlers, if carried out by Palestinians, would cost them their lives. The major issue is the land, and the Israelis want to confiscate more land at the expense of the Palestinians. So they put Palestinians into enclaves."

(c) "I will compare the case of an Israeli settler who killed an 11-year-old Palestinian boy last year. He was found guilty of the crime of killing the boy, and he received six months' community service for the killing of this Palestinian boy ... by comparison, consider the girl I mentioned earlier ... she was found guilty of planning to stab an Israeli settler. She was found with a knife in her possession but the knife was found in her bag and she had not done anything to the settler. She received one year in prison and a four-and-a-half year suspended sentence for any act she might commit within five years. You can compare these two cases."

(d) "First of all, as a Palestinian with an Israeli passport, I am not allowed to enter

Ramallah. Of course, they claim that this is for security reasons and that they are worried about my security. However ... I am allowed to enter the occupied territories, though only those parts that are still under Israeli control, using bypass roads, despite the fact that the risk of my being attacked by settlers is greater than any risk I run by entering Ramallah."

(e) "Since the beginning of the intifada, the settlers in the occupied territories have moved in tandem with the armed forces to carry out systematic attacks against Palestinian civilians; as happened on Thursday, 19 July 2001. At 9.15 that day, a Palestinian family in a village in Galilee was returning to their home. Before reaching a crossroad, an Israeli vehicle containing several settlers fired at the family and killed three persons, a 3-month-old baby and two adults. There was an Israeli checkpoint about 500 metres from where the incident took place. The Israeli vehicle went through it without being checked. An Israeli patrol arrived at the scene within two or three minutes. One of the witnesses told them what had happened and asked them to get in touch with the military checkpoint to stop or pursue the vehicle. The patrol called for an ambulance but received no response. This story illustrates the relationship between Palestinian civilians, the settlers and the Israeli forces who routinely provide security for the settlers."

D. Use of disproportionate force

53. The heightened tensions and great violence that have enveloped Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem since 29 September 2000 have caused death and injury to Palestinians and Israelis alike, with Palestinians suffering by far the greater number of casualties.

54. Statements made to the Special Committee spoke often of the considerable and disproportionate force used by the Israelis: heavy weaponry, e.g. tanks, missile-firing helicopters, on occasion F-16 aircraft, heavy machine guns with long-distance (over a kilometre) range; artillery; bulldozers for destruction of houses and other property; extrajudicial killings of specifically targeted persons that often kill or injure others; absence of adequate recourse to "incremental measures of crowd control" and premature resort to lethal measures; and the seizure by Israeli forces of symbols of national importance to the Palestinians such as Orient House in East Jerusalem.

55. The following are extracts from, or summaries of, passages in statements made to the Special Committee. They concern some of the matters brought to the attention of the Special Committee in the course of its field mission, by witnesses whose reliability the Special Committee has no reason to question.

(a) "I have spoken about the excessive use of force against civilians including the firing of often lethal rubber bullets, artillery shelling and missiles and the use of gunships and gunboats. In a number of well-documented cases, the occupying forces have used what are referred to as fragmentation bombs. I do not know the military name for those weapons, but they are essentially bombs which upon exploding spread fragments 3 centimetres in length. They have been used against civilians on more than one occasion. Most recently, on 9 June, three women from Gaza were killed after such a bomb was dropped on a residential neighbourhood located north of the Netzaren settlement."

(b) "I have seen press reports of how Israel deals with protests by Jewish extremists. I am not talking about Palestinians and Israelis, just Israeli demonstrators whose treatment differs from Palestinians. Even the Palestinian minority in Israel is treated differently. Troops are ordered to use force in an incremental manner. They should first begin without any weapons, by using water cannons, rubber coated clubs or shields. For example, security troops do not use violence against Jews. However, with regard to cases when the situation concerns Palestinian civilians ... there is an immediate resort to lethal weapons. In addition to rubber coated bullets and live ammunition, tear gas is sometimes used in densely populated areas, and scores of women and children are taken to hospitals."

(c) "They use very heavy weaponry in addition to very heavy and medium-size machine guns. They also use cannons. They bombarded the Gaza Strip and many other cities in the West Bank using Apache helicopters and F-16 jets. They bombed Gaza City with F-16 jets. They bombed Nablus with F-16 jets. This is excessive

force ... They also bombarded the Gaza Strip using rockets. I believe they have rocket bases along the northern and eastern borders of the Gaza Strip. They have often used those borders to shell the Gaza Strip. They are very destructive."

(d) "At times, thousands of Palestinians attended demonstrations at which they were fired upon. In addition, from the very early days of the Al-Aqsa Intifada, it was clear that there was indiscriminate firing on the marchers that targeted the upper part of the body. In fact, most injuries were to the chest, abdomen, shoulders, neck and head. This led to an increase in civilian Palestinian fatalities. By the end of 2000, the total number of Palestinians killed by the fire of the Israeli occupation forces was 309."

(e) "As for the destruction and poverty, it is not only a matter of families being forced to leave because their houses have been destroyed; many families were forced to leave their houses because it was too dangerous to live there. In Rafah, for example, not only were houses demolished in the border area, but families were living in the crossfire. That had an effect on the lives of the members of those families."

(f) "The camp that is targeted directly by the Israeli occupation forces is the Rafah camp. It is located on the Palestinian side on the border with Egypt ... regarding the bombardment, up until two or three months ago, the Israelis targeted the police and Fatah buildings. Fatah is the mainstream of the PLO and it has been targeted by the Israelis. Usually the Israelis used F-16s and Apaches; they also undertook bombardments from the sea. They also used tanks. For example, the borders at Rafah were targeted by tanks, but in a very selective way. The police stations were targeted by Apaches or F-16s and also by ground-to-ground missiles. Some areas were targeted inside the Gaza Strip from Israeli territory near Beit Hanun to the north of Gaza. In many instances civilian houses were also affected, whether directly or indirectly, by Israeli bombardment."

(g) "I think that the pattern of resistance can change and it has changed over the months. It started as civilians, crowds, a popular movement, but now it is more without the emphasis on these civilians — big crowds marching to Israeli checkpoints with the large numbers of casualties that we used to witness. Now it is more about shooting encounters between Israelis and Palestinians. Of course, the Israelis are more powerful and better equipped. Palestinians have light weapons. But that is not the point really. The point is that the Palestinians, whether in this way or in other ways, want the struggle to continue until the occupation ends. The Israelis with these kinds of responses — what we say is that Israeli's responses should be governed by international law. That is one thing: the Fourth Geneva Convention governs the conduct of occupiers versus the occupied, who are mainly civilians. Scores of Palestinians resort to armed struggle, to the use of firearms: that does not change the fact that Palestinians are civilians and should be protected. You cannot use F-16 planes to bomb facilities inside cities. You cannot have this policy of extrajudicial killings."

(h) "As I said, the ambulance driven by Bassan Al Baisie was coming to the assistance of the child and his father. As soon as Mr. Al Baisie arrived on the spot, intense gunfire was aimed at him, at the child and at the child's father, and he was hit in the chest. Another ambulance which was in the vicinity then arrived to evacuate Bassan Al Baisie, the child, and the child's father. It too encountered intense gunfire and it was only with difficulty that the martyr Bassan Al Baisie and the martyr and the martyr child Mohamad Al-Durra were removed. As the child's father was carried off by those who had come to help him, he was struck by further gunfire. This is based on testimony from those who witnessed the evacuation."

(i) "Sometimes I am afraid of such actions as stone-throwing. Stones are thrown when there are demonstrations, and the soldiers shoot. Do not distinguish between those who are throwing stones and the people who are walking nearby."

E. Method of arrest, administrative detention, methods of interrogation, visits from family and relatives, and conditions of imprisonment

56. In its earlier reports to the General Assembly, including its report at the previous session (A/55/453, paras. 73-95), the Special Committee has sought to convey to the Assembly the concern that the practices of Israeli authorities with respect to the Palestinians of the occupied territories on such matters as method of arrest, administrative detention, methods of interrogation, access to family and lawyers, and conditions of imprisonment were not in accord with human rights requirements.

57. Since 29 September 2000 and in the periods of heightened tensions thereafter, the practices of the Israeli authorities with respect to the Palestinians of the occupied territories have continued to be very severe and, in the opinion of the Special Committee, not in accord with human rights requirements.

58. The following are extracts from, or summaries of, passages in statements made to the Special Committee. They concern some of the matters brought to the attention of the Special Committee in the course of its field mission, by witnesses whose reliability the Special Committee has no reason to question.

Method of arrest

59. A number of witnesses spoke of the manner in which children are arrested on suspicion of involvement in the throwing of stones.

(a) "The purpose of the Israeli process of interrogation is to extract confessions from children ... in 1981 a military order was passed that allowed people to be sentenced on the basis of a confession by someone else; there did not need to be direct evidence from the Court. If someone else said this person did such a crime, he could be sentenced. The purpose of the interrogation is to extract a confession so that other children can be arrested and interrogated. So if someone is arrested at his home at night, it may be because someone else, usually under duress, mentioned his name in a signed confession, a confession that is often written in Hebrew, a language that the person signing does not understand. He may have said this person, this person, this person also threw stones with me, then the Police go to the houses of those people whose names appear in the confession and arrest them. It should also be pointed out that there are no warrants for these arrests and they just go and arrest them."

(b) "Most of the children were arrested at night, not at the site of the incident itself. I would say that 90 per cent of them were arrested in their houses, between 3 a.m. and 5 a.m., by soldiers. When they are taken into custody, the procedure goes like this for 100 per cent of them: a jeep full of soldiers comes to the house; they knock on the door as though a bomb had hit; they get inside the house ... they damage everything in the house; they beat everyone they see: the whole family; they take the kid from his bed — a 14-year-old; I have seen such small kids that you would never believe that they could ever get arrested in any country in the world; they are taken to the jeep with their hands cuffed behind their backs; they are put on the edge of the jeep so that they get scared and are frightened all the way to the prison. They put a black bag on their heads until they get to the police station."

(c) "I have heard stories from kids, which have been confirmed by social workers in court statements, that these kids are taken to different places outside the cities and mistreated ... I have a case of a 14-year-old kid ... he was taken to a garage outside the city with a black bag on his head. He was asked to move his hands and put them on the table. And they asked a friend he was arrested with to beat his hands with stones. The other guy refused, of course, and they were both asked to put their hands on the table and they were beaten by soldiers on their hands. They were scarred all over. The second day I met them in court, we tried to convince the judges that these guys had been beaten; that is one reason under Israeli law, why they should be acquitted. That reason is enough under Israeli law. The police said, 'We do not know where this comes from. They probably got scars from stones which their friends threw at them at the time of the incident', even though these kids were arrested a few days later. So they were put in prison because of an absolutely wrongful decision of a high court of appeal judge in October that anyone older than 12

years old who is arrested for throwing stones ... until his hearing is complete. So these kids who are accused of throwing stones have already stayed in prison for 4 to 6 months, so if they are found innocent, they have already spent four months in jail."

(d) "One witness spoke of the process of the storming of houses and the arresting of people in their homes ... There is a lot of intimidation. Citizens have informed us that houses are stormed by large groups of occupation soldiers in military uniforms. Most of these raids take place at dawn. The house, and sometimes the entire neighbourhood in which the person to be arrested lives, is surrounded. Sometimes more than one person is targeted in the same area. So all the houses of those targeted are surrounded by hundreds of soldiers and members of the Israeli Special Forces (under the authority of the Israeli Security Service). In some cases members of the Special Forces wear black masks. The citizens have also informed us that during the storming of houses, there is a deliberate attempt at destruction. Sometimes the contents of houses, including furniture, are destroyed. They also mess up the bedrooms. Sometimes inhabitants, including women and children, are forced to leave at dawn or at 2 a.m. or 3 a.m. Everybody is woken up and forced out during the inspection. They inspect the house using trained police dogs. Sometimes the detainees are taken out and they use high-intensity lights and the detainee is asked to undress so that they can search him without getting close to him."

Administrative detention

60. The Special Committee was informed that the practice of administrative detention continues.

(a) "As to administrative detainees, persons are held without trial. They are interrogated ... the interrogation may last for 70 or 80 days without any charge being brought, if the Israelis suspect the detainee. Having been subjected to ... prolonged interrogation ... the detainee is sentenced to administrative detention. He may be held for six months, which can be extended indefinitely. There is no limit to administrative detention. Possibly, after the last four or five three- or six-month extensions, the prisoner may be told that there is a case against him or he may be released after six or seven sixth-month extensions. Some people ... are held for seven years on administrative detention. Others are held for four or five years, their sentence having been extended every six months."

(b) "As to the question of administrative detainees, we must admit that the number of administrative detainees has diminished. There are only a few administrative detainees. The measures exist, the mechanism is there, but those who are detained today are only from the West Bank or East Jerusalem. There is a review of the detention eight days after the detention takes place. And three months later, there is a further review ... one of the problems, among others, of administrative detention is that the days of the interrogation are not taken into consideration. If people are interrogated for very long periods, in most, though not all the cases, the administrative detention will be six months in addition to the interrogation period. And the detention period can be renewed again without the need to give any explanation to the detainee himself or to the lawyer."

Methods of interrogation

61. In its report to the General Assembly at the previous session (A/55/453, paras. 86-95), the Special Committee made reference to forms of interrogation that were severe and oppressive and that sought to circumvent the limitations imposed on interrogation methods by the Israeli Supreme Court's decision of 6 September 1999. Paragraph 95 of the previous report of the Special Committee read as follows:

"All witnesses stated that the Court decision is a positive step and that, at first, it appeared to be an attempt to put an end to torture, which was routinely used at the time in Israeli prisons during investigations. But, through the constant follow-up of many cases since the adoption of the Supreme Court decision, they have come to believe that the intelligence agents and investigators are trying somehow to circumvent it and are also concerned that the decision might lead to the enactment of legislation that would allow ... coercive measures during interrogations."

62. A number of witnesses informed the Special Committee that current methods of interrogation, though not carried out in the manner of those prohibited by the Israeli Supreme Court decision of September 1999, are nevertheless oppressive and clearly not in conformity with human rights requirements.

> (a) "We had a big success in September 1999 with the Supreme Court decision against torture and regarding the illegality of the habits of the security services up until that time ... As concerns torture, a Member of Parliament by the name of Rivlin is proposing new legislation that would allow for the torture of political prisoners of terrorist cases as they are called. This bill has not yet passed. Meanwhile, if we consider the general practices of the security services, we can say that the old forms of torture are no longer being used. They have been replaced by lighter measures, such as preventing people from sleeping for long and unreasonable lengths of time. People are forced to sit on a chair, not the small chair as before, but a regular chair. Again, these people are tied in painful positions, not as they used to be, but in less painful positions. People are still blindfolded for many hours while awaiting interrogation. And two major things are being used today more than before. One is the prevention of any contact with the outside world. In particular, lawyers are not able to see a prisoner in most cases until the interrogation has been concluded ... Besides the prevention of a lawyer from meeting a person under interrogation, there is another very successful method that is being used, which is collaborators ... The collaborators are considered a legal measure. It is legal insofar as it involves posing as normal prisoners or posing as high-ranking prisoners who are involved in the security of the prison and so on. Such behaviour is, as I said, totally legal and allowed. It becomes illegal when the collaborators threaten the people under interrogation that if they do not collaborate, if they do not confess to what they have done, they will be punished by the prisoners themselves and not by the interrogators. By doing so, the collaborators are very effective in extracting information from people."

> (b) "One of the forms of interrogation and imprisonment is putting children in rooms with collaborators. The Israeli interrogators often tell the children: 'Look, if you work with us and give a bit of information, we will go easy on you. We will let you go early, and you can eat.' Often things such as access to food or the toilet or being able to go to sleep will be used as a form of bargaining with the child, to persuade the child to work with them and collaborate. Many collaborators were imprisoned when they were children and were recruited by the Israeli security forces while they were imprisoned as children."

Access to family and lawyers

63. In its report to the General Assembly at the previous session (A/55/453, para. 76), the Special Committee referred to the substantial restrictions placed on family visits to Palestinians in prison or detention. Such a practice, the Special Committee was informed, continues.

64. One witness spoke at length of such difficulties as follows:

> "I will speak about the banning of family visits. Since 1996, the Israeli authorities have issued instructions that the prisoner or detainee can receive visits only from first-degree relatives: parents, spouse, children and siblings. With regard to children and siblings, there is a designated age for the visit. Those under the age of 16 and above the age of 40 are allowed to visit. Those between 16 and 40 are not allowed to visit. There are further restrictions. There is a special permit that the family is required to obtain in order to visit their children. These permits can be refused. They are given only to first-degree relatives but may be refused on the pretext of security reasons without any convincing explanation being provided except saying that the relative has a security ban ... the family cannot visit their sons in Israeli prisons unless the visit is coordinated with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Under the conditions of closure since 29 September 2000, visits have been completely banned, even those coordinated by ICRC, and none of the families have been granted visiting permits. There are difficulties experienced by those relatives who wish to undertake such visits, if such visits are allowed,

> even with Red Cross approval ... transport in buses to distant areas. Certain prisoners are usually transferred to the south, whereas their family or relatives are from the north. There may be no waiting rooms or waiting spaces in summer or winter. In certain prisons there are no toilets that can be used by family members. Furthermore, prisoners are not allowed to use the telephone or make calls even in emergency cases such as the death of a relative, of a father or mother ... No prisoner is allowed to make a telephone call himself, but the policemen in the detention centre may contact the relative to inform him that such a person is in the detention centre, but a day or more may go by without the relatives finding out where the father or son is being held at that time ... Furthermore, as a result of the ban on family visits, there is a lack of provisions for the prisoners because 45 per cent of their needs are usually met by family members. They rely on such provisions, which have been reduced because of the lack of family visits. They suffer in other ways too. A prisoner may be transferred without the family's knowledge ... Those conditions have existed since last year and there have been further restrictions, in particular, a complete ban on family visits. But telephone communication has always been subjected to restrictions ... If they are arrested by the police, there is no problem in visiting them from the first hour they are imprisoned, unless they are in investigation. But if they are arrested by the security or the secret services, those services have a right to refuse lawyers meeting with them for 21 days, then another 21 days, which is normally what happens. But in Jerusalem, most of those arrested are arrested for throwing stones, not like those who are arrested in the West Bank, who are arrested for being connected to a terrorist group; that is a different case."

65. In its report to the General Assembly at the previous session (A/55/453, para. 92), the Special Committee referred to steps taken to prevent or delay lawyers visiting Palestinians in prison or in detention:

> "... there has been an escalation in the practice of preventing lawyers from visiting their clients. According to the military orders ... the intelligence services can prevent lawyers' visits for interrupted periods that can range anywhere from 30 to 60 days. ... Hence, the detainee will largely be isolated from the outside world and open to all forms of psychological pressure, because the Supreme Court did not consider psychological pressure to be a form of torture."

66. The restrictions that continue with respect to visits of lawyers was spoken of by one witness as follows:

> "Normally a lawyer is allowed to come and visit his clients, but now they say 'oh no, since you are residents of the occupied territories, you cannot freely enter Israel. We can take your clients to be interrogated in Israel but their lawyers cannot come and meet them there'; although at the beginning we tried to fight the fact that people are taken to Israel to be interrogated — this is also in contravention of the Geneva Convention — we lost this battle on a legal basis. Lawyers cannot visit and represent their clients in a free way. Nowadays lawyers have to get a permit. Not every lawyer can get such permission because some of the lawyers have already been declared to be suspected of contacts with illegal organizations. So only a few lawyers would get such permits and the civilian administration would have a list of lawyers who can get these permits. At the beginning of this new intifada, they used to give permits for a whole month. Now they limit the permits to sometimes one day a week and they decide on which day the lawyer can visit his clients. Some time ago they still used to allow lawyers to come with their own cars; now, forget it. You cannot. Your lawyer should walk in between the different border posts and then take a taxi to get to the prison. If you are not allowed to see the client, if he is under this limitation, you will be able to represent the client, without him, before the court that is near the interrogation centre and you would have to go back."

Conditions of imprisonment

67. In its report to the General Assembly at the previous session (A/55/453, paras. 78-85), the Special Committee made reference to the conditions of imprisonment of Palestinians from the occupied territories. The statements made to the Special Committee in the course of its field mission during the current reporting period appeared to confirm that the

imprisonment of Palestinians by Israeli authorities continued to be very harsh, involving or resulting in hunger strikes in protestation by prisoners, inadequate medical treatment provided for prisoners and the difficulties experienced by women prisoners.

68. Speaking about health conditions inside prisons, a witness informed the Special Committee that a state of medical negligence prevails: negligence on the part of the prison administration and management with regard to the Palestinian detainees. A medical care facility is installed in every prison, but doctors are available for consultation once or twice a week. Detainees have also to wait for several months before being transferred to a proper hospital for the necessary medical tests and examinations. Food quality has been described as very poor, to the extent that most of the Palestinian detainees buy their own food.

69. There are currently 10 Palestinian female detainees at Ramla Prison-Female Section. The treatment of women detainees is reportedly no different from that of male inmates. Reference was made to the case of Ms. Sana Amer, who was beaten and her hands and legs shackled to a bed from 6 p.m. to 8 a.m. for two days. Another witness informed the Special Committee that some female detainees are kept in the same section as the Israeli Jewish common-law prisoners. They are subjected to attacks and harassment on a daily basis.

70. The following are extracts from, or summaries of, passages in statements made to the Special Committee. They concern some of the matters brought to the attention of the Special Committee in the course of its field mission, by witnesses whose reliability the Special Committee has no reason to question.

(a) "Obtaining permission from Israeli authorities for Palestinian doctors to examine patients requires considerable effort, because there is a list of 45 Arab doctors approved for possible prison visits. However, most of the Arab doctors allowed into the prisons happen to be residents of the West Bank or have West Bank identification and these days such doctors need special permits from the competent authorities to enter Israel. Obtaining such permits may require a wait of several months because, in addition to the permit to enter Israel, a permit is also required from the prisoner patient to allow the doctor to enter prison. Thus, months may go by before obtaining permits."

(b) "They have repeatedly demanded that some of the outstanding demands be solved, but the prison administration has not responded to those demands. On 23 July, the women prisoners took steps to protest against the prevailing conditions. They refused to participate in recreation and to eat and they threatened further action if they were not given due representation, access to books, the media, letters and family visits; if they were not allowed to open the doors between cells, to install fans in the rooms, to enjoy one hour's exercise every day or to have shade in the area of recreation or medical assistance."

(c) "The other prison where minors are detained is at Telmond. At that prison, a section has been prepared for Palestinian children whom we call political or security prisoners because they were convicted in security cases; however, since the beginning of the events of September 2000, Israel has decided that children who throw stones should not be considered as political or security cases but rather as ordinary criminal cases; that is why those minors were grouped with other minors — Arabs and Jews who are criminal prisoners."

(d) "There are several major issues with regard to children in Telmond prison. The first is the imprisonment of children with Israeli juvenile criminal prisoners. There are about 12 Palestinian children who are now being held in the same section as Israeli juvenile criminal prisoners ... what has happened to the children in this section is that they have been harassed both physically and verbally in a severe manner by the Israeli juvenile criminal prisoners. There have been cases of personal belongings being stolen and of children being beaten or cut with razors ... despite all our attempts ... to move the Palestinian children to a special section of the prison, the Israeli Prison Authority has refused to do so ... there have also been many cases of beatings of Palestinian children by Israeli prison guards. In fact, from the beginning of 2001 to July 2001, we have recorded four occurrences of severe beatings of Palestinian children by Israeli prison guards. The most recent of these occurred on 26 June this

year ... the prison guards entered the cells with batons and heavy sticks using tear gas and beat the children ... four children were placed in solitary confinement after being beaten by the prison guards ... Our lawyer attempted to visit Telmond Prison and was denied access. He was told that as a result of a new policy by the Israeli Government it was now impossible for Palestinian and Israeli lawyers to visit children who have been sentenced ... There is no way they can receive a lawyer's visit. This is very problematic. Since 26 June, when those beatings occurred in Telmond, we have had no information of the situation inside the prison ... No family visits for children detained in Israeli jails have been permitted since the beginning of the intifada in October 2000."

(e) "... boy children over 16 at the time of their arrest are detained in Megiddo prison, which is run by the Israeli Ministry of Defence. Because they are treated as adults, none of the special requirements of children are met ... there is no way they can continue their education. All prisoners in Megiddo are housed within tents. They are not housed in normal cells. They obviously have a roof, but they are open to the elements: the wind, the rain and the heat in summer and winter ... There is no possibility for family visits. Our lawyer has been prevented from visiting for several weeks now. Because they receive no family visits, they are not able to get items of clothing. So they are forced to swap their items of clothing with criminal prisoners. I should also mention that female political prisoners are together with Israeli criminal prisoners in the same area."

(f) "It might seem to be better to be a criminal prisoner in Israeli jails because conditions are so comfortable. They can use the phone and go outside. But the Palestinians from the occupied territories cannot get those privileges because they are afraid that Palestinian prisoners will not return to finish their sentences. So they never get home visits or phone calls because security reasons are cited ... In my opinion, if they are treated inside the jails as criminals, they will lose from the point of view of ideology. They will lose the humanity of being people who are resisting. We were so afraid when we heard that kids have been placed with criminals. We are talking of 15- or 16-year-olds who are in prison for the first time. There is heroin inside the jails with criminals and many other things can happen."

(g) "Another problem related to the situation of minors is the severe sentences handed down by the military tribunals. Since the beginning of these events, the severity of these sentences has increased greatly. In the past, we were able to obtain the release, under bond, and with a pledge from the family, of a minor under 14 years of age who had thrown a stone, but under current conditions such a person is sentenced to four to five months in prison."

F. Overall consequences of such a manner of occupation

71. The overall consequences — in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem as a whole — of such a manner of occupation have been catastrophic across the whole spectrum of Palestinian life in the occupied territories.

72. The following are extracts from, or summaries of, passages in statements made to the Special Committee. They concern some of the matters brought to the attention of the Special Committee in the course of its field mission, by witnesses whose reliability the Special Committee has no reason to question: a general sense of frustration and desperation that seems to be all-pervasive; disruptions of trade, crippling unemployment, the resulting general poverty; overwhelming difficulties in the provision of health services; generations of children traumatized; and the severe strains on public authorities.

Pervasive frustration and desperation

(a) "You have to stand in line with your car, with thousands of cars waiting to be checked and you feel that you are going to explode. I am a philosopher, not a violent person. I am peace-loving. But with these Israeli practices it is very difficult to imagine. Every Palestinian family has been affected. Not only economically. Maybe one member of your family has been killed, imprisoned, wounded or disabled. We are talking about 3 million Palestinians and we are talking

about so many dead, so many wounded and so many houses demolished. Every Palestinian family has been affected."

Disruption of trade, unemployment and poverty

(b) "There are also restrictions on the movement of goods. There is currently a limited closure with regard to trade. Such trade takes place, naturally, under the control of Israelis and there are great difficulties. For example, workers cannot now enter Israel. Before the events that started last September, there were thousands of workers from the Gaza Strip working within Israel. None of them are working now. Palestinian statistics indicate that there were 130,000 Palestinian workers before September 2000. While that figure may be correct, there were also thousands of undocumented Palestinians working in Israel. About half were from the Gaza Strip and half from the West Bank."

(c) "It should also be taken into account that there has been an effect on all sectors: in agriculture, tourism, industry and trade. Workers from those sectors cannot even find work in the Gaza Strip. This is a result of the closure. I am not an economic expert and I do not have exact unemployment statistics, but there is a very high level of unemployment in the Gaza Strip as a result of the closure."

(d) "A study prepared by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics noted that 14.4 per cent of Palestinian families have lost their source of income since 29 September 2000 and another 47.4 per cent have lost more than half of their income since 29 September 2000 and a total of 64.9 per cent are below the poverty line and the percentage is higher in Gaza than in the West Bank."

(e) "Thus, we are talking of about two thirds of the Palestinians being below the poverty line. Poverty is defined as 1,642 Israeli shekels for a family of six: husband, wife and four children. So we are really talking of $400 divided by 6. Almost two thirds of Palestinians living in the occupied territories fall into that category. There is more poverty in Gaza because Gaza relies more on work in Israel and the number of workers in Israel has been reduced radically. Furthermore, Israel is not transferring the money it owes to the Palestinian National Authority: taxes, deductions, customs, value-added tax, deductions from employees for benefits. These transfers of money used to account for more than 50 per cent of the budget of the Palestinian authority."

(f) "The rate of poverty among the Palestinian people has now gone beyond 82 per cent, according to official statistics, and this has sounded an alarm for the Palestinian people.

(g) "The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is the major provider of services to refugees in the Gaza Strip; 75 per cent of the population of Gaza is made up of refugees who benefit from the services of UNRWA ... now, as in the past, UNRWA's work is a relief effort, not a development effort. Given the magnitude of what is happening, neither UNRWA nor the Palestinian Authority is capable of paying the bill. What is happening is very serious and it is having negative repercussions. Over the past 30 years, Gaza has been transformed into a servant of the Israeli economy. The Palestinian workforce in the Gaza Strip has been transformed into a source of cheap labour which can sell itself only in the Israeli labour market ... now that the crossings have been closed, the overwhelming majority of Palestinians have been denied the opportunity to return to their places of work in Israel, even though they work there on a daily basis. UNRWA must now provide for the needs of the Palestinian people. Earlier I mentioned Jabaliya, which is the largest refugee camp. Work in Israel provides the major source of income for those who live there, followed by UNRWA, which is both a relief and a works agency for refugees, although employment has been curtailed to the minimum."

(h) "Some non-governmental organizations and charities provide relief or aid for refugees. Apart from that, the Palestinian Authority tries to maintain minimum services for the community even though it is facing very severe problems politically and financially. These are affecting not only refugees but the whole community. There has been a change in the socio-economic situation, and this is reflected in political and social attitudes, which will have

consequences at a later stage for Palestinian society."

Disruption of the provision of health services

(i) "The closure policy also affects health. Many people have died at military checkpoints in the West Bank ... There are military checkpoints on the principal highways. Palestinians must get around those checkpoints over very rough terrain. They usually encounter checkpoints even on that terrain. Getting to hospital by way of detours might sometimes take 3 to 4 hours, while on the main road it would take only 20 minutes. We have documented cases of births at military checkpoints."

(j) "There are really major difficulties with regard to health, especially in the Gaza Strip. At one point during the intifada the forces of occupation divided the Gaza Strip into three isolated zones: the northern, central and southern. The major hospitals in the Gaza Strip are located in the City of Gaza itself. The hospitals at Khan Younis and Rafah have limited facilities. The central zone, which is a large zone, lacks the sort of medical services available in Gaza City. Beyond the services of clinics and those provided by UNRWA, patients from the central zone must seek treatment in hospitals. Central zone patients must go to the Al-Shifa hospital in Gaza City or to Nasser in Khan Younis. During the closure that possibility does not exist."

(k) "There have been many complicated cases in which we have proved, through numerous medical reports, the need for a person to go to Jordan for treatment because the treatment he needs is not available in the West Bank or Gaza or is exorbitantly expensive. Many times the person would be allowed to leave only a day or two before his surgery is to take place ... With regard to Jerusalem and the West Bank, there is no way for anyone to inquire whether he is allowed or not allowed to leave. The only way is to go to the King Hussein Bridge and attempt to cross; there he is either arrested, sent back or allowed to cross. This is a huge problem in making preparations to travel: one wonders whether one would be arrested. There is no way to inquire in advance whether one would be allowed to leave."

(l) "The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights spoke in her report about 44 ambulances that were prevented from proceeding by the Israelis. Now the number is about 120. The essence of the practice is about the same. The United Nations High Commissioner saw for herself, she herself says in her report, how ambulances were prevented from reaching the wounded. This is repeated on a daily basis. That is why I say that the Palestinian people cry out, we raise our voices, in Arabic we say 'my heart has been extinguished', because there has been so much suffering, which we have talked about, which the world knows about and has seen our suffering. I warn that we must recognize the reality: our people are desperate and also angry, and not only at the Israelis but also at the United Nations ... My granddaughter, who is three and a half years old, asked, 'Where are you going?' I said, 'To Amman'. I tried to explain to her that I was going to Amman to tell the world about the Israeli shelling of houses and children. She immediately said to me, 'Does that mean that all this will come to an end when you come back?'"

(m) "The siege is preventing medical crews and teams from reaching clinics and hospitals, particularly in the outlying, remote, poorer areas. Seventy per cent of the citizens in Palestinian areas now cannot receive medical treatment in hospitals ... citizens cannot get to the hospitals to receive treatment. ... I can cite examples of patients who died at checkpoints while in ambulances and others who delivered babies at these checkpoints ... many cancer patients or those suffering from chronic diseases such as heart attacks or kidney failure and those who require dialysis have died because they were unable to reach a hospital or to receive the necessary medication. In the northern area, for instance, there is only one hospital which performs dialysis, in Nablus. Thus all the patients in this area, those who live in the surrounding villages — in all approximately 500,000 people — cannot go to Nablus to have dialysis ... Another point is that pregnant women cannot go for regular check-ups. Therefore, since the intifada began, the ratio of home deliveries has increased fivefold. Many heart and diabetes patients die either because of shortages of

medicine or because of their inability to get to the hospitals: they take smaller doses instead of taking two tablets a day, they take one ... the purchasing ability is very low. People can barely buy medicines. Fifty per cent of our people have no health insurance. Therefore, since they depend on services provided by NGOs and given our inability to move around, those patients are either not treated or they continue to suffer from diseases or they die, joining the majority."

Children and education

(n) "As regards the schools and preventing children from going to school, four schools in the West Bank have been converted into military barracks; 41 schools have been closed; 42 students were killed in the first two months of the intifada. UNRWA in the Gaza Strip stated that, as of 15 November 2000, students had lost 1,100 school days."

(o) "The impact of the seizures and closures touches all aspects of Palestinian life, including education. The adverse effects on education were most pronounced at the outset of the intifada, when education at most schools and universities stopped for almost two months. Violations pertaining to education include the Israeli transformation of four schools in Al-Khader area into military camps."

(p) "Most of the patients suffer from deep depression. Some of these cases suffer from deep aggression. It is naturally the case for children and the effect on the psychological state of children. Among the first words my granddaughter learned was the word '*takh*' (shooting). When she hears any sound, even the sound of television or radio or any high-pitched sound, she immediately says innocently '*takh-takh-takh-takh*'. Sometimes she can sleep only when next to her mother. She cannot sleep by herself. When her mother travelled to Amman for one day some time ago, the child did not sleep for 24 hours until her mother returned, because she hears about murders, disappearances and deaths. Children suffer immensely in Palestine."

(q) "Unemployment highly affects people's ability to receive medical help and services. This leads to malnutrition. It also gives rise to the spread of many diseases, especially among children. This affects the psychological well-being of people. Many children experience so-called psychological disturbances and melancholy; they wet their beds, have horrible dreams, are unable to focus on their studies, have a terrible fear of any sound, cry for no reason, are afraid of going to school, and so forth. There are many psychological manifestations."

Disruption of public services

(r) "There are no hospitals in the villages or in the countryside, and because of the travel restrictions there are problems in the areas of education, worship, health, as well as social problems, involving family visits and relations. But I think work also gets disrupted in most Palestinian institutions. The Palestinian legislative council is not able to meet daily, to hold sessions to legislate. It was elected to legislate and monitor the work of the executive branch, but it is not able to do so because of the travel restrictions. Members from Gaza cannot get to the West Bank, and vice versa. They cannot come from the different cities of the West Bank to the centre in Ramallah ... the Palestinian police and other security services are not functioning as they should. Prison facilities have been attacked by the Israelis. If you go to Ramallah, it is clear that the Palestinian police are more worried about their own safety than about providing services ... they are not able to provide adequate facilities to the Palestinian people ... The overall result of the travel restrictions are as follows: fewer services to Palestinian citizens, less work, less security, less justice."

G. The continuing difficulty of Palestinians in East Jerusalem

73. Israel has pursued a policy of "passive transfer" of Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem since its annexation of East Jerusalem in 1967. It has sought to establish a demographic balance between Jews and Arabs so that Arabs do not exceed 26 per cent of the population of Jerusalem.

74. It has used various means against Arab East Jerusalem's residents to prevent an increase in the

population and has tried to encourage them to leave the city by making their lives in it intolerable.

75. In the pursuit of these policies there has been cooperation between various ministries, notably the Ministry of the Interior, the Jerusalem Municipality and the National Insurance Institute.

"Centre of life" policy

76. Under Israeli law the Arab inhabitants of East Jerusalem are treated as permanent residents of the State of Israel. They do not have Israeli citizenship. They have the right to live and work in the State of Israel without needing special permits. They have the right to participate in local elections, but they do not have the right to vote in Israeli elections.

77. East Jerusalem residents also have the right to obtain social benefits in accordance with Israeli law. They must pay taxes, both income taxes and the municipal tax (*arnona*), plus payments to the National Insurance Institute.

78. Since 1995, the Ministry of the Interior has pursued a "centre of life" policy with regard to the Arab inhabitants of East Jerusalem. In order to retain their status as permanent residents of the State of Israel, they are required to prove that their centre of life is in Jerusalem by submitting documentary evidence, e.g. electricity bills, water bills, rental contracts, certification of payment of *arnona* taxes for the past seven years. The burden of proof is on the individual to prove that his centre of life is in Jerusalem, rather than the burden of proof being on the Ministry of the Interior to prove that the person's centre of life is elsewhere.

79. This policy has resulted in the following actions by the Israeli authorities:

- Confiscation of Jerusalem identity cards of those unable to prove that their centre of life is in Jerusalem;
- Refusal of the Ministry of Interior to register children born to parents, one of whom does not possess a Jerusalem identity card;
- Refusal to register persons for family reunification, in particular, a spouse who does not have a Jerusalem identity card, or obstruction of attempts to register.

80. The "centre of life" policy is not clearly stated. Lawyers do not know exactly what they have to prove in order to convince the Ministry of the Interior that a person's centre of life is in Jerusalem.

81. When the Ministry of the Interior decides to withdraw an identity card, withdrawal can take place without prior notification and without the provision of reasons. In many cases a person's identity card is confiscated on the spot when he goes to the offices of the Ministry of the Interior for some reason or other. Border officials have also confiscated identity cards when a person was away on travel.

82. The offices of the Ministry of the Interior treat Palestinian residents in a degrading way. Residents have no choice but to wait outside the office without shelter for hours, exposed to the elements. Jerusalemites are forced to sleep at the Ministry of the Interior in order to gain access to the building. Many do not succeed in gaining access.

Family reunification

83. Individuals who would like to benefit from family reunification cannot live in Jerusalem until the request is granted, unless they obtain a special permit. Decisions by the Ministry of the Interior regarding family reunification can take up to four years. During the interim period, families are forced to remain apart. When a Jerusalem resident applies for family reunification for a family member, he or she has to prove that their centre of life is in Jerusalem.

84. Currently, all requests to the Israelis for family reunification are on hold. This makes people's lives unstable and the situation tense. According to one witness, Palestinians are afraid to attempt to visit their relatives for fear they may not be allowed to return home. In addition, registrations of newborn children in Jerusalem are also on hold. Moreover, as the Palestinian Authority is responsible for transmitting requests for family reunification to the Israeli authorities, and as administrative communication between both sides is currently at a low point, it is becoming increasingly difficult to fill a request and obtain an authorization.

Registration of children

85. A memorandum of intent will not permit the registration of a child until it is proven that both parents' centre of life is in Jerusalem. Until this

criterion is satisfied, a long time may elapse. In the meantime, the child cannot be registered in a governmental school as he or she does not have an identity card. The family will thus be denied the allocations/subsidies provided by the National Insurance Institute.

Social benefits

86. The National Insurance Institute also requires that Jerusalemites prove that their centre of life is in Jerusalem. Inspectors from the Institute interview families about this issue. The inspectors speak with the family in Arabic, but record the interviews in Hebrew, which is not understood by the vast majority of the residents. The interviewee is asked to sign a summary of the interview. The Jerusalem Centre has dealt with cases where the inspectors did not record the interview accurately in Hebrew and what was recorded was harmful to the interviewees' claim that their centre of life was in Jerusalem.

Taxes

87. The proceeds from the *arnona* (municipal tax) are used to fund the provision of services by the Jerusalem Municipality. Even though more than 50 per cent of East Jerusalem is in the highest tax band, Band A, there is clear discrimination between the level of services provided to Palestinian areas in Jerusalem and to Jewish areas.

Settlements

88. Israel is seeking to prevent territorial contiguity between East Jerusalem and Ramallah to the north, East Jerusalem and Bethlehem to the south, and East Jerusalem and Jericho to the west and to control all the land around Jerusalem.

89. There is also an Eastern Ring Road project which will construct an infrastructure of roads linking all the settlements and encircling Arab East Jerusalem. Lands have been confiscated in Ras al-Amud, Mount Scopus and Wadi Joz for this purpose.

Building permits

90. In 90 per cent of cases, houses in East Jerusalem are constructed without a permit. Fourteen houses in Shufat were recently demolished. Houses can be demolished by municipal order or court order. The municipality can issue such an order if the house is uninhabited or has been inhabited for less than two months. The house can be demolished 24 hours after the order has been issued, leaving very little opportunity for Palestinians to challenge the order in the High Court, even if they can afford to pay a lawyer to do so. It takes an average of two years to process a court order for the demolition of a house.

H. The special difficulties of the Palestinians in refugee camps

91. The attention of the Special Committee was drawn to the condition of the approximately 1,407,621 registered Palestinian refugees living in the refugee camps of the West Bank and Gaza, in depressing circumstances under severe restrictions that have continued for decades and have been made considerably worse since 29 September 2000.

92. As noted in paragraph 19 above, a number of persons living in a refugee camp in the Syrian Arab Republic also requested to be heard by the Special Committee and spoke of their difficulties.

93. The following are extracts from, or summaries of, passages in statements made to the Special Committee. They concern some of the matters brought to the attention of the Special Committee in the course of its field mission, by witnesses whose reliability the Special Committee has no reason to question.

(a) "In the occupied territories, 50 per cent of the residents of both the West Bank and Gaza combined are refugees ... The fact that UNRWA is operational in the field does not mean that the refugees are getting their full range of rights adequately represented. UNRWA may be covering some legal rights of Palestinian refugees, but its mandate is very focused and limited to assistance, social welfare, education — these types of things ... When Israel is deliberately imposing a siege, what resources do the Palestinian refugees have to fall back on? What economic resources? They have very few economic resources because they are by definition landless, unless they have been very fortunate and have been able to purchase land since then. All their original land holdings have been confiscated without compensation. So they lost everything. Many of them live in camps, although not all of them. There are refugees who

live outside camps. They have very very limited means of subsistence that they own themselves, so they are very vulnerable."

(b) "The refugees are so vulnerable because they cannot go out and farm. They have nowhere to raise goats or sheep. They don't have orchards. They don't have chickens. They don't have space. They are living in camps or they may be renting or what have you."

(c) "Regarding the daily life of Palestinians in the refugee camps, as I said earlier, the problems began in the aftermath of the outbreak of the current intifada ... the Palestinians who were dependent on the Israeli labour market for work have been completely denied employment. Refugee camps are the most overcrowded places in the world. According to UNRWA figures — these are on the UNRWA web site — almost 140,000 people live in the Shati refugee camp, which covers only 1 square kilometre. So one can imagine what kind of life they lead."

V. Occupied Syrian Golan

94. During its visit to Damascus, the Special Committee received from the Director of the International Organizations Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic the text of the report entitled "Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic on Israeli practices affecting the human rights of Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Arab Golan". The Special Committee reproduces below the English translation of the report, as presented in Arabic, by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

"Due to the ongoing Israeli occupation of the Golan, its Syrian Arab population are continuing to suffer from violations of the most fundamental principles of law, justice and human rights by the Israeli occupation authorities, which are using every means of repression, coercion and terrorism against the Syrian Arab population, who have been suffering under the yoke of occupation since 1967, in total disregard of international law and the series of resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations and in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international humanitarian law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property of 1954.

"Your distinguished Committee is visiting the Syrian Arab Republic for the thirty-third time pursuant to the relevant General Assembly resolutions, the most recent of which was resolution 55/130 of 8 December 2000, while Israel is still refusing to receive and cooperate with your Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, which was established under the terms of General Assembly resolution 2443 (XXIII) of 19 December 1968.

"Since the submission of our last report in May 2000, the human rights situation of the population of the Syrian Arab Golan has remained difficult due to the manner in which the present Israeli Government, like its predecessor, has obstinately persisted in its arbitrary and coercive policies and practices, particularly the expansion of settlements with all that this involves by way of expropriation of land and water and violations of the rights of the population of the occupied Syrian Golan.

"In its previous reports, your Committee made the international community clearly aware of the true nature of the tragic situation of the Syrian population living under Israeli occupation due to the policies and practices in which the Israeli occupation authorities are engaging.

"In our present report, like those of previous years, we will be referring to documented statements by Israeli officials and articles published in the Israeli press concerning the policies and practices that are being inflicted on our citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan in violation of all international laws and human rights instruments.

"This information and documentation will help you to prepare your report and to give a true account of the manner in which, since its aggression in 1967, Israel has been continually challenging the international community and its humanitarian values as detailed below:

"A. The annexation of the Golan

"The Golan is situated in the south-western part of the Syrian Arab Republic, of the territory of which it forms an integral part. It covers an area of 1,860 square kilometres, extending 67 km from north to south and 25 km from west to east.

"Since 1967, Israel has been occupying part of the national territory of the Syrian Arab Republic in the Golan and blatantly violating the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, including the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907, the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination of 1965 and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as international humanitarian law and numerous United Nations resolutions, particularly Security Council resolution 497 (1981).

"Since the beginning of its occupation of the Golan, Israel has been engaging in repressive and arbitrary practices and inhuman acts designed to isolate the Golan, detach it from its Syrian motherland and subsequently annex it to Israel and impose the policy of fait accompli for which, at the same time, it was preparing the ground at all the official, popular, legal and political levels through large-scale inflammatory information campaigns. The most significant of those measures and attempts to annex the Golan were as follows:

- In June 1979, the Golan, Galilee and Jordan Valley Settlements Committee, with encouragement from the Government and political movements in Israel, collected signatures on a petition stating that the Golan was an integral part of Israel. The petition was signed by 73 members of the ninth Knesset representing most of the political parties and, in particular, Likud and Ma'arach. They subsequently formed the so-called 'Golan lobby'. The first regional council in the Golan, comprising 14 settlements controlling most of the land in the Golan, was established at the settlement of Khisfin.

- In July 1980, the Israeli Citizenship Act was amended in such a way as to empower the Minister of the Interior to grant Israeli citizenship to the population of the territories occupied in 1967.

- In October 1980, two motions calling for the annexation of the Golan to Israel were tabled in the Knesset. The first was put forward by the Tehiya movement and the second by 18 members of the ninth Knesset, all of whom belonged to the ruling coalition.

- In November 1980, offices were opened in the Arab villages of the Golan for the issue of Israeli identity cards and attempts were made to impose Israeli citizenship on the Syrian Arab population.

- In March 1981, Geula Cohen, a member of the Tehiya movement elected to the Knesset, once again put forward a motion calling for the annexation of the Golan to Israel.

- In July 1981, Begin announced his Government's second programme, paragraph 11 of which stated that Israel would never relinquish the Golan or remove any settlement that had been established there. It also stipulated that the Government would determine an appropriate time for the application of Israeli law, jurisdiction and administration in the Golan.

- On 14 December 1981, the Israeli Government brought before the Knesset a bill of law providing for the annexation of the Golan. It was approved by a majority of the members of the Knesset and Israel officially declared its annexation of the Golan.

- Following the announcement of the annexation decision, the Israeli Minister of

the Interior issued orders for the Border Guard and the police to take over the maintenance of public order from the army. However, all the pre-annexation directives concerning detention, permits and visas remained in force. The Minister of Justice also ordered the establishment of two conciliation courts, the first being in the Syrian Arab village of Mas'ada and the second at the settlement of Katzrin in the central Golan. These two courts were endowed with legislative powers in the Golan. The Minister also granted wider powers to the Nazareth district court to hear cases concerning the Golan, as well as appeals against judgements handed down by the two conciliation courts. The Minister of Communications opened a government office at Mas'ada.

- On 14 February 1982, Israeli nationality was imposed on the Syrian Arab population of the occupied part of the Golan.

"In addition to the above, prior to the decision to annex the Golan, the Israeli authorities implemented other administrative and organizational measures, including the following:

- Dismissal of village headmen elected by the Syrian Arab population;
- Imposition of local councils by force, in so far as the Israeli authorities appointed their members;
- Attempts to induce Syrian Arab residents to join dubious organizations in Israel, such as the Druze-Israeli Scouts and the Druze-Zionist Organization;
- Establishment of dubious associations, such as the Druze-Zionist Circle, in the occupied Syrian Arab villages;
- Forcing Syrian Arabs to join Histadrut, for which clubs were established;
- Forcing Syrian Arab citizens to subscribe to the medical insurance scheme and the Kupat Holim sickness fund;
- Forcing Arab teachers to join the Teachers Union in Israel;
- Preventing Arab citizens from establishing charitable associations to cater for their medical and social needs;
- Replacing Syrian Arab vehicle licence plates with Israeli plates;
- Recording new births in registers bearing the title "State of Israel, Ministry of the Interior";
- Imposition of Israeli currency;
- Appointment by the Minister of the Interior of an adviser on Druze affairs in the Golan, a post that reports directly to the Ministerial Committee on Arab Affairs;
- Imposition of the Hebrew language on the Syrian Arab population;
- Exertion of pressure on Syrian Arab citizens to vote in elections to the Knesset;
- Linkage of the economy of the occupied Syrian Arab villages to the Israeli market and attempts to damage that economy by making it dependent on Israeli enterprises.

"Through the above-mentioned measures, Israel attempted to obliterate the Arab and national identity and affiliations of the Syrian Arab population of the occupied Golan with a view to facilitating its annexation and the imposition of Israeli nationality.

"Last year, declarations made by Israeli officials and measures actually taken showed that Israel was determined to continue its aggressive and expansionist policy of annexing the Golan.

"B. Israeli settlement in the Golan

"Expansionism, aggression and denial of the historic rights of others are the principal features that have characterized the successive extremist and aggressive Israeli Governments. Israeli settlement in the occupied Syrian Golan, expropriation of land and water, expulsion of the Syrian population from their lands and implementation of the policy of Judaization are basic constituents of Israel's permanent higher strategic objectives.

"Since the beginning of the occupation of the Golan in 1967, the Israeli occupation

authorities have formulated a settlement plan to alter the demography of the Golan in which, according to the most recent statistics compiled by the Central Bureau of Statistics in Damascus in 1967, between 157,000 and 164,000 Syrian Arab citizens were living at that time either in the town of Quneitra or in the 300 villages and farms, from which they were evicted when all the inhabited areas were razed, with the exception of the villages of Majdal Shams, Ain Qunya, Buq'ata, Mas'ada and al-Ghajar, where the inhabitants held on to their villages and lands in spite of all the repressive practices of the occupation authorities, rejected Israeli identity and resisted the occupation in expectation of the Golan's return to its motherland. About 23,000 Syrian citizens are currently living in the Arab villages of the Golan, where they are being subjected to various types of repression and violations of the human rights provided for in international instruments, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.

"At the present time, there are 40 Israeli settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan in which more than 15,000 settlers are living and Israel has decided to construct a further 2,500 housing units in order to increase the number of settlers to 36,000.

"These settlements, which were built to replace the Arab villages destroyed by the occupation forces, bear names derived from the Torah, from the names of alleged ancient Jewish settlements or from Hebrew corruption of some Arabic place names. This reveals the attempts that are being made to endow these locations with a false Hebrew identity in order to justify their occupation.

"The settlement plans and activities during the present year and the summer of last year confirm the aggressive and expansionist intention of the present Government of Ariel Sharon and the Government of his predecessor Ehud Barak to perpetuate the occupation of the Golan. Israeli settlement operations in the Golan from May 2000 to July 2001 are illustrated by the following:

- The Ministry of Housing and Construction announced a tender for the construction of 86 housing units in a residential area of the settlement of Katzrin which was established about two and a half years ago and already comprises 260 housing units.

- In April 2000, the Ministry began the preparatory work for the construction of 200 housing units at that location and Sami Bar-Lev, the chairman of the Katzrin local council, confirmed that the settlement's expansion plans would continue as normal (*Ha'aretz*, 2 June 2001).

- The Israeli Ministry of Housing and Construction announced a tender for the construction of 194 new housing units at the settlement of Katzrin. The preparatory work for the construction of these units had actually begun several weeks before the announcement of that tender (the Jerusalem newspaper *Al-Quds*, 4 June 2000).

- With regard to the seizure of Arab land, on 8 June 2000, the occupation authorities sealed off parts of the village of al-Ghajar on the pretext of demarcation of the frontier with Lebanon. A total area of about 10 km^2 of the village land was sealed off in spite of the strong protest by its residents, who held a sit-in in the village on 9 June 2000, when students from the village also refused to attend their secondary school at Mas'ada. On 5 February 2001, Israel continued its arbitrary actions by surrounding the village of al-Ghajar with a barbed-wire fence and earth embankments, leaving it only with a narrow point of access on the southern side. A trench was also dug around the village on the north-eastern side, where iron posts were embedded in the ground. The iron gate that used to link the village to the neighbouring Lebanese village of al-Wazzani was removed, thereby preventing the inhabitants of al-Ghajar from talking to Lebanese citizens, and an iron gate was installed to the north of the village in order to deny its inhabitants access to the Lebanese border.

- On 29 June 2001, the Israeli newspaper *Yediot Aharanot* reported that plans had been made for the construction of about 150 new housing units at eight settlements in

the Golan through the addition of 10 to 20 single-storey houses at each of the settlements (Bnei Yehuda, Kanaf, Kidmat Zvi, Givat Yoav, Neot Golan, Ramat Magshimim, Keshet and Had-Nes).

- In the latter part of June 2000, Israeli bulldozers began the preparatory work for the construction of 207 new housing units at the settlement of Katzrin. Twenty of these units were sold and the names of 90 families wishing to live there were registered. The occupied territory of the Golan was witnessing intense construction activity through the commencement of preparations for the construction of numerous housing units at the settlements (*Yediot Aharanot*, 29 June 2000).

- On 24 August 2000, the newspaper *Ha'aretz* reported that the Israeli occupation authorities had given the green light for a plan under which 350 dwellings were to be constructed at the settlement of Ke'la Allon which Israel had established in the central part of the occupied Syrian Golan. This was revealed on 23 August by representatives of the Israeli settlers in the Golan, who announced that it would help to ensure a ten-fold increase in the number of settlers living in that settlement.

- On 22 August, the Israeli Planning Commission approved a plan for the construction of three residential areas at the settlement of Katzrin, thereby authorizing the construction of 86 new dwellings for settlers. These new settlement dwellings which the occupation authorities have decided to build form part of the 200 dwellings the construction of which was announced on 11 April 2000.

- It is noteworthy that the Israeli occupation authorities have accommodated about 17,000 Israeli settlers in the occupied Syrian Golan.

- The Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* also revealed that, on 20 August, the Galilee Settlement Committee had approved a structural plan for the expansion of the settlement of Ke'la Allon in the occupied Syrian Golan. According to the newspaper, that settlement, which currently accommodated 19 Jewish families, would be expanded to include 350 new settlement units and thousands of new settlers. The heads of the Israeli settlement councils in the Golan had welcomed the measure to increase the pace of settlement and construction in the Golan.

- The *Al-Quds* newspaper, which is published in the occupied Arab territories, revealed that, according to Israeli sources, hundreds of housing units had been constructed in recent months at a number of Israeli settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan and that various settlements were currently being expanded through the construction of new residential areas to absorb new settlers. The newspaper had also learned that a start had recently been made on the construction of water reservoirs for the settlers in the occupied Syrian Golan and that the heads of the settlements in the Golan were intending to establish a new settlement. At the same time, the Jewish Agency had published a report indicating that 73,000 new Jewish immigrants from various parts of the world had come to Israel during the last year as permanent residents. Israeli Army Radio, which broadcasts in Hebrew, had quoted that report as saying that 63,000 of the new settlers had come from the States of the former Soviet Union and 3,500 from Ethiopia and that Sallai Meridor, the Chairman of the Jewish Agency in Israel, had called for those settlers to be absorbed in the Israeli settlements.

- According to Israeli sources, hundreds of housing units had been established during the summer of 2000 at a number of settlements in the Golan and various settlements had been expanded through the construction of new residential areas such as Savyon Katzrin. The leaders of the settlers in the Golan had said that they intended to establish a new settlement (*Al-Quds*, 27 September 2000).

- The Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* revealed that there had been a strong upswing in

settlement activity in the occupied Syrian Golan, illustrated by the existence of plans for the construction of 1,500 new housing units at the settlement of Katzrin. In its edition published on 1 November 2000, the newspaper further reported that environmental studies were currently being conducted for the construction of new settlement units on the slopes of the occupied Syrian Golan and the establishment of the requisite infrastructure therefor. The newspaper quoted a source at the office of former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak as saying that expansion in the Golan had resumed intensively following the removal of all the obstacles impeding it. The newspaper added that an area of 1,500 dunums had been annexed to the western suburbs of that settlement and the Israeli Border Affairs Committee, having recently approved plans to expand the settlement, had referred those plans to the Northern District Planning and Construction Committee. Yigal Shahar, the district director at the Israeli Ministry of the Interior, said that the procedures for obtaining approval would be speeded up in order to preclude the appearance of any internal opposition. He claimed that, from the legal standpoint, the Golan formed part of Israel and they had no directives indicating the contrary. The newspaper also referred to the existence of another plan for the establishment of a further 50 housing units at the settlement of Ke'la Allon and reported that the Office of the Israeli Prime Minister had approved the conduct of studies in preparation for an expansion of settlements in the occupied Golan, including the construction of 2,500 new housing units at the settlements of Kanav and Maaleh Gamla.

- The Israeli Northern District Planning and Construction Committee approved a new scheme for the construction of an additional 50 housing units at the settlement of Ke'la Allon and the Office of Prime Minister Barak authorized the conduct of an environmental study for the construction of a further 2,500 housing units at the settlements of Kanav and Maaleh Gamla (*Al-Quds*, 2 November 2000).

- The expansion of settlements continued in the Golan, where the occupation authorities further expanded the area of their 40 settlements. The most recent illustration of this appeared in the 2 November 2000 edition of the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz*, which spoke of Israel's intention to expand its settlements through the construction of a further 1,500 housing units at the settlement of Katzrin, the largest settlement in the Golan. Other settlements would also be expanded and supplied with water and the occupation authorities had decided to construct new housing units on the slopes of the Golan, including 50 new units at the settlements of Kanav and Maaleh Gamla in the southern and central Golan.

- Following the failure of the political talks between Israel and Syria, the structural planning for additional settlement buildings and improvement of the settlement infrastructure in the occupied territory of the Golan resumed. These plans included the construction of a further three residential areas comprising 1,500 housing units over and above those provided for in the structural plan for the settlement of Katzrin. They also included the installation of sewage pipes and the construction of waste-water treatment plants and rainwater storage facilities. An official from the Office of Prime Minister Barak said that they had resumed the normal pattern of activity and had held consultations with all the Israeli bodies concerned with settlement. Various articles in the press also indicated that the competent Israeli authorities had approved the construction of a new residential area on 1,500 dunums of land to the west of the settlement of Katzrin for the first time in 20 years (*Al-Quds*, 2 November 2000).

- According to Israeli sources, an amount of $7 million was to be invested for the establishment of a large commercial and tourist centre covering 11,000 m^2 devoted to high-tech industries in the area under the

control of the local council of the settlement of Katzrin (*Yediot Aharanot*, 10 November 2000).

- On 24 December 2000, the Israeli authorities approved the expansion and development of the core settlements in the Golan and the establishment of new settlements, thereby further confirming Israel's true expansionist intentions in the Golan. In a previous decision, referred to as 'Golan 2000', they had expressed their desire to more than double the current number of 17,000 settlers in the Golan.

- According to an Israeli source, the Israeli Ministry of Housing had invited tenders for the construction of 200 housing units at the settlement of Katzrin, the new dwellings to be built in a new residential area at that settlement in which about 7,500 settlers were already living in the latter part of 2000 (*Al-Quds*, 12 December 2000).

- According to Israeli sources, on 29 December 2000, the Israeli Government had given the green light for further settlement projects in the Golan under which 350 new dwellings would be constructed at the settlement of Ke'la Allon, which the occupation forces had established in the Golan, as a step which both the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption and the settlers regarded as part of the endeavours to ensure a ten-fold expansion of that settlement. This new aggressive settlement decision supplemented other measures which Israeli political and settlement authorities had announced the previous April, including tenders for the construction of a further 86 housing units at the settlement of Katzrin 'as part of a new settlement plan for the construction of more than 200 new housing units to help to intensify and expand Zionist settlement in the Golan'.

- In a statement published by the Spanish newspaper *El Mundo* on 2 February 2001, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said that he was renewing his commitment to maintain the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan and the Arab city of Jerusalem, including the Haram al-Sharif. Sharon also repeated his refusal to accept the principle of the return of the Palestinian refugees to their homes and lands, re-emphasizing his commitment to consolidate the Israeli occupation of the areas of the Jordan valley, including the Dead Sea, which he regarded as eastern security areas for Israel.

- In an interview with the *Al-Mushahid* magazine published on 19 February 2001, Zalman Shoval, adviser to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, reaffirmed Israel's rejection of withdrawal from the Golan as the price of peace.

- The international news agencies recently reported that Israel had announced its intention to call for tenders for the construction of 100 houses and 200 huts on the Golan Heights (June 2001).

- The newspaper *Al-Sinnara*, which is published in the occupied Arab territories, reported that large military units supported by the police had bulldozed areas of agricultural land owned by Syrian citizens. The newspaper quoted the landowners as saying that the measure was intended to prevent the population from using the land in the future. On 25 June 2001, the Israeli occupation authorities called for tenders for the construction of 300 housing units in the occupied Syrian Golan in spite of international demands for a freeze on settlement construction in order to establish peace in the region of the Middle East. According to officials at the Israeli Ministry of Housing, those new housing units would be built at the settlement of Ke'la Allon in an area close to the borders with the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon. However, Moshe Raz, a member of the Israeli Parliament who had examined the plans, admitted that the housing units constituted a new settlement.

- A left-wing member of the Israeli Parliament said that, on 25 June 2001, Israel had announced a public invitation to

tender for the construction of 38 housing units at the settlement of Maaleh Adumim to the north of Jerusalem in the West Bank and had also invited contracting companies to undertake other work for the construction of 100 dwellings and 220 rooms for tourists in the Jewish settlements on the Golan Heights which Israel had occupied in 1967 and annexed in 1981. The Member of Parliament, Moshe Raz from the left-wing opposition party Meretz, told Agence France-Presse that the invitation to tender supplemented other similar invitations issued during the previous month in connection with the construction of 496 housing units at the same settlements and since Sharon had become Prime Minister in March, other calls for tenders had previously been issued for the construction of 212 housing units at the settlement of Alfei Menasheh to the east of Qalqiliya in the northern part of the West Bank.

- On 11 July 2001, the international news agencies reported that Ariel Sharon, the Israeli Prime Minister, had commended the settlement operations in the occupied Syrian Golan and called for their expansion. During the inauguration of a studies centre at Katzrin, one of the largest Israeli settlement blocs in the occupied Golan, Sharon had described the settlement of that area as one of the most important achievements and successes in the history of Zionism. He went on to say that the expansion of settlements and the installation of new settlers was the only way to consolidate the occupation of the Golan and turn it into what he called an 'irreversible situation'. If, one day, the Syrian Arab Republic wished to negotiate, the negotiations would be unconditional. The two sides would sit down at the table and each would submit its demands. That was the way to negotiate.

- In a further attempt to violate Syrian Arab national sovereignty over the Golan, the occupation authorities brought in a large number of mercenaries from the so-called 'South Lebanon Army' and attempted to settle them in the Golan following their retreat, together with the Israeli occupation forces, from southern Lebanon in the face of the blows struck by the heroic Lebanese resistance. Their settlement therein was categorically rejected by the inhabitants of the Golan, who issued a declaration stating that 'we reject the presence in the Golan of these lackeys, who desecrate our Syrian Arab land'.

The authorities in power in Israel are taking these and other measures as part of their political approach aimed at imposing new faits accomplis on the ground in an attempt to improve their negotiating position and obtain a high price for Israel's future relinquishment of the territory. Until that time, Israeli officials and the settlers in the Golan believe that any expenditure on settlement projects constitutes recoverable costs. With regard to the ideological aspect of settlement in the Golan, there is a clearly evident bias in favour of the pragmatic objectives of the Government and the settlers, which are being exploited internally and abroad for various purposes.

"C. Expropriation of land and water

"The occupation authorities have curtailed the area cultivated by Syrians from 14,000 hectares in 1966 to 8,400 hectares in 1987. They have confiscated agricultural land and forbidden grazing while at the same time encouraging the settlers to produce meat, milk and fish and establish numerous light industries such as the manufacture of electric and electronic equipment, plastics, furniture, heating appliances and wine. The Israeli authorities have also expanded their tourist-related activities and installations.

"Since agricultural production constitutes the basic source of livelihood for the population of the Golan living in the occupied villages (Majdal Shams, Mas'ada, Buq'ata, Ain Qunya and al-Ghajar), from the beginning of the occupation of the Golan in 1967 the Israeli occupation authorities have engaged in the following practices:

(a) Progressive encroachment on the land belonging to those villages and harassment of their Syrian Arab population;

(b) Confiscation of hundreds of dunums of land on security pretexts in order to turn them into minefields, thereby exposing the farmers to constant danger;

(c) Fencing off of areas of land for military purposes, such as shooting ranges, military manoeuvres and the construction of roads and military installations;

(d) Denial of access by the Syrian Arab population of the occupied villages to the water resources available in those villages. For example, they are prevented from making use of the water in Lake Mas'ada, which is being diverted to the Israeli settlements in the Golan;

(e) It is prohibited for the population to bore artesian wells and even to construct reservoirs for the collection of rainwater and snow even though numerous wells are being bored for the benefit of nearby settlements, as a result of which the ground-water level in the villages has dropped;

(f) The Israeli occupation authorities have deliberately reduced the price of apples, which constitute the main item of agricultural production in the occupied villages, to its lowest level. They also levy exorbitant charges and taxes, amounting to a minimum of about $20 per ton, for the transport and marketing of the apple harvest;

(g) For the second time, the Israel Lands Administration has uprooted plum trees belonging to an Arab citizen of the Golan on the pretext that the ownership of the land (covering an area of 4 dunums) on which he had planted them was disputed.

"With regard to water, the Israeli occupation authorities are continuing to pursue their aggressive policy against the population and the environment by:

- Expropriating the surface and ground water in the Golan and selling it to Syrian Arab citizens at high prices, thereby threatening the livelihood of farmers by making it impossible for them to irrigate their crops;
- Detonating explosive charges in the Golan, thereby devastating the land and causing its water resources to seep underground.

"All these practices are greatly accelerating the pace of environmental degradation to the detriment of the Arab population of the occupied territories.

"Prior to 1967, the population of the Golan relied for its water needs (for household and agricultural purposes and in order to water its livestock) on springs, wells and lakes, particularly Lake Mas'ada (Ram), the storage capacity of which was increased from about 600,000 m^3 to about 3 million m^3 after Israel made some improvements to the shores of the lake and installed a pumping station and a network of pipes to distribute the water to the settlements, while allocating only a limited quantity of the water from the lake to the Syrian population. Since the Golan depends on underground resources for its supply of drinking water, the Israeli company Mekorot bored six wells to supply the settlements. In view of the system of severe racial discrimination from which the Syrian population is suffering by not being allowed to bore wells, some of them resorted to the construction of open reservoirs to collect rainwater. However, the Israeli authorities have demolished some of the reservoirs and have installed meters on others in order to levy exorbitant charges for water consumption.

"According to the available information, in 2000 there were about 17,000 settlers distributed among 43 settlements in the occupied Golan, and more than 20,000 Syrians, approximately half of whom were living in the village of Majdal Shams. Water consumption in the Golan currently amounts to about 50 million m^3/year, of which about 8 million m^3 is allocated to the Syrians (i.e. 400 m^3 per person per year) for all uses while the 17,000 settlers consume about 42 million m^3/year (i.e. 2,470 m^3 per person per year, equivalent to more than six times the consumption of the Syrian citizens living in the occupied Golan). There are two water supply systems in the Golan; the first, in the northern Golan, depends on Lake

Ram and springs, cisterns and wells, while the other, in the southern Golan, depends on springs, wells and water pumped from Lake Tiberias and the lower Yarmouk River. Nevertheless, the current water consumption in the Golan (50 million m^3) is far less than the Syrian Arab Republic's expected quota of water from the upper Jordan River due to Israel's practice of discriminating between Syrian citizens and Jewish settlers with a view to making it difficult for the Syrians to earn a livelihood and forcing them to submit to Israeli laws.

"D. Taxation

"This can be summarized as a policy of economic strangulation in all fields and the imposition of numerous taxes which, as a general principle, are levied on everything. These taxes, which are many times higher than those paid by Israeli citizens, cover all aspects of life. For example, there is a tax on the possession of a household radio or television (US$ 20), a house tax and taxes on income and property, as well as a tax in respect of sickness, the local council and national insurance, and value-added tax.

"The occupation authorities take 17 per cent of any income obtained by citizens, and taxes are collected at regular intervals in a violent manner. For example, the owner of an ordinary motor vehicle has to pay an amount equivalent to $2,200 per year simply in order to be allowed to drive it, quite apart from the other taxes and dues that are payable, and $500 is levied in respect of each agricultural tractor. There are also taxes on agricultural crops. For example, $100 is payable in respect of a two-ton truckload of apples and $300 to $400 in respect of a similar load of cherries, and a further tax of 17 per cent is levied when they reach the wholesaler. The population is also forced to pay annually for land insurance, regardless of whether the harvest is good or bad.

"The occupation authorities exercise arbitrary control over construction and refuse to authorize any expansion plans for the villages in the occupied Golan, all of which are suffering from an acute shortage of land for construction. In the occupied Golan, the issuance of construction permits has to be approved by an Israeli intelligence officer known as Yitzhak and his assistant Meroz. The overall aim of the high taxation is to attempt to subjugate the population through economic strangulation. A tax of $2,000 is imposed in respect of every house built without a permit and the authorities demolish the house if the amount is not paid. The occupation authorities also impose a tax on students attending Damascus University, who are not allowed to go there until they have paid numerous taxes, the purpose of which is to harass the Syrian Arab population by extorting money from them in an attempt to induce them to abandon their higher education. In addition, Arabic language books are subject to exorbitant taxes, from which Hebrew books are exempt.

"The authorities also impose exorbitant taxes in respect of access to the irrigation network, these taxes amounting to $1,500 for the irrigation of each dunum of land, even though the water originates from the land of Syrian citizens, who even have to pay for the water that comes from cisterns and reservoirs that they have constructed on their land, an amount of $1.00 being levied on each cubic metre of irrigation water, in addition to the taxes on agricultural crops which, together with the cost of tending the land and harvesting, is equivalent to the value of the crop.

"E. Economic attrition of the land and the population

"Hundreds of Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan have abandoned agricultural work after losing their land due to the lack of water, because of their inability to compete in the domestic market with the settlement crops which are subsidized by the Israeli occupation authorities or because of the obstacles impeding their purchase of agricultural requisites or the export of their produce. From time to time, the Israeli occupation forces uproot fruit trees and move arable earth from the remaining five villages inhabited by Syrian citizens to the Israeli settlements. The Israeli occupation authorities also confiscate livestock, confine grazing to areas in the immediate vicinity of the villages in the Syrian Golan and impose a tax on livestock, as a result of which the Syrian citizens of the Golan are forced to sell their

flocks and herds which constitute the source of their livelihood.

"Industrial projects require funding, which the Israeli occupation authorities make available only to the settlers, and trade also requires capital, governmental facilities, freedom of movement and external contacts, none of which are available to Syrian citizens. There are also exorbitant and arbitrarily assessed municipal, habitation and insurance taxes which alone consume more than half the income of industrialists and traders, quite apart from the income, national insurance, compulsory loan and other personal taxes levied on property owners. The inevitable result of the Israeli occupation authorities' deliberate introduction of this wide array of taxes has been to limit the potential for industrial and commercial development, the aim of this policy being to weaken the economy of the Golan, make it dependent on the Israeli economy and lower the standard of living in order to induce the population of the occupied Syrian Golan to abandon their lands.

"Syrian citizens are denied access to employment in governmental and public institutions which, since their establishment, were intended to benefit only the settlers. The Israeli occupation authorities invoke security considerations, as well as the fact that the majority of the Syrian population are unfamiliar with the Hebrew language, as a pretext for refusing to employ them in governmental and public institutions. Hence, we find that the number of persons holding governmental jobs is very limited, being confined to some teachers at Arab schools and some officials at institutions dealing with Syrian citizens. Moreover, the Israeli public security departments always withdraw the work permits of Syrian citizens who refuse to collaborate with the Israeli occupation authorities.

"These practices have unquestionably worsened the critical economic situation prevailing in the occupied Syrian Golan due to the occupation and its practices, particularly since the standard of living of the Syrian population is well below the poverty line. In fact, the occupied Syrian Golan has been turned into a reservoir of cheap labour, a source of taxes for the Israeli treasury and a market for Israeli exports.

"Agriculture, the population's basic source of livelihood, and particularly apples, their principal crop, are the main target of these practices consisting in the uprooting of trees, restriction of the area under cultivation, obstruction of its expansion, imposition of exorbitant taxes on crops, increases in the prices of pesticides, prevention of the population from boring wells or using the groundwater on their land, imposition of fines on, and finally prohibition of, the reservoirs and cisterns which the population construct to collect rainwater for use in the irrigation of their land, and the sale of irrigation water at exorbitant prices to the population.

"The devastation and economic attrition to which the land is being subjected by the Israeli occupation forces was highlighted recently, at the beginning of July, when they burned extensive areas (estimated at more than 50,000 m^2) of forest and orchard land in the occupied Shabaa farms area in order to further strengthen and fortify their positions in that area. They were also responsible for similar fires on the agricultural land of our people in the occupied Golan.

"The newspaper *Al-Bayadir al-Siyasi*, which is published in the occupied Arab territories, reported that the Israeli occupation forces were continuing their acts of aggression against our people and their property in the occupied Golan. In its edition published on 11 July 2001, the newspaper reported that, two days earlier, occupation forces had burned an area to the east of the village of Buq'ata, as a result of which extensive plots of cultivated and grazing land were destroyed and the inhabitants of Buq'ata were forced to spend the entire night trying to extinguish the fire and save their crops.

"Israeli occupation forces also set fire to extensive areas of land to the east of the village of Mas'ada in the occupied Golan.

"In southern Lebanon, security sources reported that military bulldozers and earth-moving equipment were fortifying two Israeli positions at Magharr Shabaa and Fashkoul in the Shabaa farms area and surrounding them with

earth embankments. On the previous day, a military crane and five large trucks loaded with cement blocks had been despatched to the position at Ramta and began to erect a cement wall at the south-eastern corner of that position. Israeli occupation forces also set fire to extensive areas of forests and olive groves in the occupied Lebanese Shabaa farms area.

"The national information agency reported that the area of about 50,000 m^2 which had been set ablaze in those farms ran from Zabdin in the west to the ski resort in the east. It went on to say that the purpose of setting fire to that land was to eliminate the trees, which provided useful shelter for members of the resistance in their operations against the occupation army in the area, and to facilitate the occupation army's land and air reconnaissance and observation operations.

"The owners of those farms appealed to the international emergency forces to ensure the prompt cessation of that Israeli crime.

"F. The situation of the Syrian Arab workers

"Israel has engaged in numerous practices against workers, farmers and dentists in the villages of the occupied Golan whom it has prevented from travelling to the Syrian Arab Republic to participate in the trade-union congresses, which are held on a regular basis, after we had given approval for them to attend. Israel announced that it would permit only elderly persons and university students to visit the Syrian Arab Republic. However, the only elderly persons whom it allows to visit the Syrian Arab Republic are collaborators who comply with its orders, such permission being denied to elderly persons who reject the occupation and refuse to submit to Israel's policy and orders.

"Although male and female Syrian Arab citizens living under the occupation used to be allowed to visit the Syrian Arab Republic about twice a year, Israel is currently refusing to approve any applications for such visits.

"Through the heads and members of the notorious local councils whom they appoint in each village, the Israeli authorities in the occupied Golan Heights are pursuing a hostile policy towards factory and construction workers, particularly those who resist the occupation and adopt a sound nationalist attitude in keeping with national objectives, while welcoming citizens who collaborate with Israeli institutions and the occupation authorities in the occupied Golan.

"The deplorable situation from which Syrian Arab citizens are suffering as a result of the ongoing arbitrary practices of the Israeli occupation authorities is continuing and the sufferings of workers, as detailed in the reports for previous years, have not been alleviated. In fact, their sufferings can be said to have increased due to the continuous acts of aggression and the domineering attitudes with which the Israeli authorities are attempting to exercise hegemony over the Syrian Arab population living under the occupation. Workers constitute a sizeable proportion of the Syrian population of the occupied Golan, most of whom depended on forms of agricultural work. However, the majority have been forced to abandon their agricultural work due to the policy of economic strangulation pursued by the occupation authorities, who are imposing exorbitant taxes, reducing the prices of crops and increasing those of agricultural requisites, etc., thereby forcing the workers to enter the clandestine labour market and engage in physically strenuous and laborious jobs such as cleaning, construction and miscellaneous services. The overall situation of the Syrian Arab workers in the Golan, who are being exploited in various ways, can be summarized as follows:

(a) Low wages, amounting to less than half the wage paid to Israeli workers;

(b) Physically strenuous, arduous or hazardous work;

(c) They work long hours, with overtime, in order to earn a living, even though their wages are low in relation to the high cost of living (the Israeli authorities have set the poverty line at a monthly wage of 7,000 shekels and therefore, with a monthly income of no more than 4,000 shekels, an Arab worker lives at just above half the poverty level while the income of any ordinary Israeli worker is never less than 10,000 shekels).

- Israeli employers pay no compensation for occupational injuries to any Arab worker

from the Golan or elsewhere, as a result of which the worker's family is faced with a major problem of subsistence if he is unable to work.

- Unemployment, from which Syrian and other Arab workers suffer, is a perennial problem in view of the fact that workers are never insured and are under constant threat of dismissal.

- In addition, the Israeli occupation authorities impose taxes on workers' wages and anyone who fails to pay is stopped on his way to or from work at the checkpoints set up for workers, such as the checkpoint on the main road at Banyas. Workers are required to pay all the outstanding taxes under threat of having their property impounded and confiscated if they fail to do so.

"The manner in which workers are exploited is illustrated by the fact that employees at the Ain Qunya nursery school are obliged to sign declarations accepting reduced financial entitlements and compensation.

"G. The policy of systematic intellectual stultification and cultural and historical distortion

"The education policy that Israel is pursuing in regard to our people in the Golan and Palestine can be truly and accurately described as a policy of systematic intellectual stultification and an attempt to obliterate their Arab identity by imposing Zionist concepts and values on them. The objective of the Israeli curriculum is to undermine and destroy the Arab national identity of the Syrian Arab students in the Golan, merge them in Israeli society through culture and modes of thought and behaviour and sever their close, time-honoured links with their Syrian motherland and their Arab nation.

"1. The school curriculum

"The Israeli curriculum has been imposed and Arab history has been distorted following the abolition of the Syrian Arab curriculum from the schools in the Golan in the academic year 1967/68 immediately after the occupation. This constituted a flagrant violation of the human rights and the national cultural identity of the Syrian Arabs in the occupied Golan insofar as the Israeli curriculum which replaced the Arabic curricula is attempting to destroy the sense of national identity of the students in the occupied Golan through the imposition of an alien culture and modes of thought and behaviour, as is clearly evident from the following examples:

(a) In Arabic language classes, emphasis is placed on texts which portray inter-tribal feuds, fanaticism and scenes of bloodshed, highlight scandalous erotic poetry and disregard the most famous poets and literary figures.

(b) In geography classes, Arabic place names are changed to Hebrew names. For example:

Lake Tiberias becomes Lake Kinneret; Jabal al-Hariq becomes Mount Hiron; Hawwa Valley becomes Mishushim Valley; Abu al-Nada Hill becomes Har Avital; Mount Ajloun becomes Mount Gilead; the Bsharre cedar forest becomes Solomon's cedar forest.

Considerable emphasis is also placed on the territorial and confessional distribution of the population and on expressions, such as "Middle East", which negate the unity of the Arab World.

(c) In history classes, events that took place in ancient and modern Arab history are presented in a maliciously selective and falsified manner. For example, the Arabs are portrayed solely as nomads and Arab civilization in China and in Mesopotamia, Egypt and Syria in the pre-Islamic period is disregarded. A further example can be found in the sixth-grade primary history textbook which states that the Caliph Abdul Malik ibn Marwan built the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock in 691 AD during his war with Ibn al-Zubair in order to entice people away from the pilgrimage to Mecca. This is intended to give the impression that those two sites are not Muslim holy places since they were built for reasons linked to that internecine conflict.

Yet another example of historical falsification can be found in a book entitled *The Geography of the Middle East* which states that,

when the world became concerned about the fate of the antiquities in the Temple of Abu Simbel, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) appointed an investigative commission to save them. However, it is well known that, in actual fact, it was the Egyptian Government which appealed to the world to save those antiquities and supervised their protection.

(d) Heritage classes are designed to promote confessional distinctions by inventing a special heritage for each community in our homogeneous Arab society.

"2. School books and teaching staff

"The policy of the Israeli occupation authorities in this regard has not changed since the occupation in 1967. Its sole purpose is to obliterate Arab national identity by imposing Israeli educational curricula and the Hebrew language and focusing on Hebrew history and literature and to justify Israel's aggressive policy. To this end, the authorities employ unqualified teaching staff from the five villages and refuse to appoint competent graduates of Syrian universities as teachers. From time to time, they also dismiss and terminate the contracts of Arab teachers who attempt to instil a sense of Arab nationalism in the students. The aim of this policy is to exclude any national patriotic feelings towards the Syrian motherland from the educational process and to create a weak sense of identity through the promotion of confessionalism.

"3. University education

"Students in the occupied Golan are being prevented from receiving a university education through the requirement that every student wishing to study at Syrian universities must pay an amount of $50 when submitting an application and also whenever they return after the summer holiday. This amount is not reimbursable if the student's application is rejected. Students are also subjected to harassment and ill-treatment at the crossing point at Quneitra and those travelling home for the summer holiday are not permitted to bring presents for their families. In addition, the occupation authorities impose annual school fees equivalent to $1,000 per student at the secondary level and the conditions laid down for admission to Israeli universities are impossible to meet in view of the high annual tuition fees, amounting to more than $7,000 per student. Those universities are continuing their policy of racial discrimination against Arab students. Moreover, Syrian students are not allowed to study certain subjects such as dentistry, pharmacy and law unless they hold Israeli citizenship. Hence, it is impossible for students from the occupied Golan to enter those universities.

"4. The cultural situation

"This too is being constantly undermined by the Israeli policy of hegemony aimed at obliterating the national culture of the Syrian Arab citizens in the occupied Golan and isolating them from their Arab nation and their fellow Arab citizens by restricting cultural activities in general and preventing the regular publication of newspapers and magazines.

"In the archaeological field, antiquities have been seized from 211 archaeological sites and uncovered in the occupied Golan, as the occupation authorities have themselves admitted in the information media. These finds, together with other antiquities, have been moved to Israeli museums or acquired by various Israeli individuals and institutions. In addition, the media falsely ascribe many of these sites, in an emphatic and misleading manner, to the Jews and the so-called 'ancient Jewish State'.

"It is evident, therefore, that the educational and cultural situation of our Syrian Arab citizens and students living under Israeli occupation forms part of Israel's overall policy of obliterating the identity of the Arabs in order to marginalize, dominate and control them and abort any incipient resistance. This is rejected by our citizens in the occupied Golan, by our brothers in the other occupied Arab territories and by the Syrian motherland in an Arab patriotic and nationalist stand that is both proud and steadfast.

"H. The health situation of the Arab population of the occupied Golan

"The five occupied Arab villages are suffering from an acute shortage of health centres and medical clinics. Since there is no hospital in these villages, any of their inhabitants who require even simple surgical operations are obliged to travel to towns outside the Golan, such as Nazareth, Safad or Jerusalem, at great expense. They are suffering constantly in this regard due to the shortage of first-aid centres, physicians and specialized medical clinics, even though they are taxed in respect of the sickness fund and the hospitals and health centres that do not exist in their villages. Although our citizens have established a medical complex of their own at Majdal Shams which provides basic essential services, it does not compensate for the lack of a hospital. Our citizens are charged high prices for medication and the occupation authorities force everyone to take out health insurance with the Kupat Holim sickness fund, which charges high premiums in return for basic health services, the cost of which is covered by only part of those premiums.

"Our citizens in the occupied Arab villages are living in difficult conditions due to the low standard of health care and the obstacles that are placed in the way of any local initiatives to improve the health situation and meet the minimum requirements in this field. The aim of this policy is to force the Arab population to deal with Israeli health institutions, accept the fait accompli and submit to the Israeli annexation decision. The main features of the health situation in the villages of the Golan can be summarized as follows:

(a) There is no hospital in the Golan to provide health services for the Arab population;

(b) There is no laboratory to carry out medical analyses;

(c) There is no gynaecological or maternity clinic;

(d) There are no radiographic facilities;

(e) There is no first-aid centre to treat emergency cases;

(f) There are no specialized (gastrointestinal, ophthalmic, ENT, neurological, etc.) medical clinics;

(g) The health situation in general is suffering from neglect and lack of concern.

"I. Destruction and pollution of the environment and defacement of the natural landscape

"The Israeli occupation authorities continued to violate all international laws and norms in the occupied Arab territories and Israel's nuclear facilities still constitute a source of real nuclear terror in the region since they are not subject to any international control or supervision and, consequently, the waste from those facilities poses a serious threat to the environment and the population. These violations by the occupation authorities are best illustrated by the fact that, on 26 November 2000, the Israeli paint company Tambour stockpiled 1,500 barrels of radioactive substances (referred to as 'paint') in warehouses in the village of Majdal Shams after an earlier attempt to send them to southern Jordan was rejected by the Jordanian Government. Our citizens in the Golan also rejected those substances and forced the company and the authorities colluding with it to remove them from the occupied Golan.

"The numerous ways in which the occupation authorities, and particularly their military forces, are destroying the environment and defacing the natural landscape of the occupied territory of the Golan are exemplified by the following:

(a) The holding of training exercises and manoeuvres inside, or in the vicinity of, nature reserves, as a result of which the vegetation has been burned, fires have broken out and spread and those reserves have been virtually reduced to ashes. For example, in June 1993, training exercises led to the outbreak of three fires that destroyed about 3,000 dunums of natural forest land most of which was in the area of Fiq in the southern part of the Golan;

(b) Damage to archaeological sites and relics, which had remained virtually intact for thousands of years, due to the movement of tanks

and the impact of armour-piercing shells and various types of explosives;

(c) Random firing at landmarks and signposts;

(d) The careless and uncontrolled construction of roads for military purposes, which has led to the disfigurement of natural areas and destroyed the superstructure of many sites due to the failure to respect the conditions for road construction;

(e) The removal of artefacts from archaeological sites, such as the marble decorations on the walls of sites and the valuable icons in the Golan church which date from the fourth century AD;

(f) The excavation of graves in the search for gold artefacts;

(g) The bulldozing of orchards and forests and the burning by settlers of farms owned by Syrian citizens, which has led to degradation of the local environment;

(h) The burial, by the Israeli authorities, of toxic chemical waste on land belonging to the Syrian village of Majdal Shams and in the Lebanese Shabaa area following the failure of their attempt to export that waste to Jordan when its true nature was discovered by the Jordanian authorities (that radioactive waste, which was subsequently returned to Israel is now being sold as 'paint constituents' to the Arab population);

(i) The laying of mines in the territory of the Golan, as a result of which cattle, sheep and other livestock belonging to Syrian farmers have been killed and local residents are unable to farm or utilize their land;

(j) Although it is well known that agricultural production constitutes the basic source of livelihood of the population of the occupied villages of the Golan (Majdal Shams, Mas'ada, Buq'ata, Ain Qunya and al-Ghajar), the Israel Lands Administration has, for the second time, uprooted the plum trees belonging to an Arab citizen of the Golan;

(k) The occupation authorities' use of depleted uranium in southern Lebanon is confirmed by the increased number of cases of leukaemia at hospitals in the southern Lebanese town of Sidon. Israel's dumping of nuclear waste in the Mediterranean also poses the alarming threat of environmental disasters in the light of data confirming the daily increasing dangers inherent in the Israeli nuclear facilities and the waste that they generate, particularly as none of those facilities are subject to any international control, not even by the International Atomic Energy Agency. Regional and international organizations have reported that Israeli factories are still disposing of their toxic waste at a number of locations in the occupied Syrian Golan and the occupied West Bank, and a report published by the Mid-East Realities organization has confirmed that there are not less than 50 locations at which toxic waste is being dumped in the West Bank.

"J. Destruction of built-up areas and looting of property

"Following the occupation of the territory in 1967, the occupation authorities destroyed 244 villages and built-up areas in the Golan and expelled their population, sparing only five villages (Majdal Shams, Buq'ata, Ain Qunya, Mas'ada and al-Ghajar). Not even places of worship, schools and health centres escaped destruction. The underlying aim of the occupation authorities was to eliminate Arab landmarks and obliterate the Arab identity of the Golan, as a result of which anyone who visits the Golan today is able to identify the locations of the former Arab villages only from their ruins.

"At a seminar organized by the Middle East Studies Center in Washington, D.C., Helena Cobban, a British author specialized in Middle Eastern affairs, said that during her most recent visit to the Golan in 1998 she had met several displaced persons from the Golan at the locations in which they had been concentrated and discovered that their number amounted to about half a million (it had previously been estimated at 157,000-164,000 in 1967 when the Israeli occupation authorities evicted them from their villages, which were reduced to rubble as could clearly be seen by anyone who visited the remnants of their villages and destroyed homes in the Golan).

"Cobban said that those displaced persons remained emotionally attached to their towns and villages in the Golan, to which they were eagerly yearning to return. In the United States, there was talk of the material cost of removing the settlers from the Golan, but no thought was given to those families who had been forced to leave the Golan more than 30 years ago and among whom an entire generation had grown up outside its towns and villages, all of whom, together with their children, remained attached to their homes which had been destroyed by the occupation forces.

"It is noteworthy that the Israeli occupation authorities transformed many of the villages into agricultural land and projects or surrounded them with trees in order to hide their ruins. The stones from the houses that they destroyed were used for various military purposes, such as the construction of positions and fortifications. In addition, losses were suffered due to the looting of property (crops, livestock, projects, furniture, equipment and machinery, etc.). For example, Israelis looted the goods that they found in commercial establishments at Quneitra and in the villages of the Golan, expropriated herds of cattle and flocks of sheep and goats (there were about half a million head of livestock in the territory at that time) and also seized hundreds of thousands of tonnes of agricultural produce.

"K. Excavation and looting of antiquities

"The Golan prior to the Israeli aggression in 1967

"The territory of the Golan is rich in archaeological sites dating from the Stone Age to the early, middle and late Bronze Ages, the classical period and even the Arab Islamic period. This development, wealth and cultural continuity throughout the ages is attributable to the wide variety of natural factors which encouraged settled life in the region from ancient times to the present day, particularly its fertile plains, slopes, mountains and valleys ranging in elevation from 2,814 m at the summit of Jabal al-Sheikh/Mount Hermon to 212 m below sea level on the eastern shores of Lake Tiberias. The territory is rich in springs (the sources of the Jordan and Yarmouk rivers), rivers and lakes (the Jordan River, Lake Houleh and Lake Tiberias in the west and the Yarmouk river in the south), as well as valleys with abundant water in winter and spring and copious snow and rainfall (an average of 750 mm per year). The Golan also occupies a central strategic position, constituting a hub for communications between the geographical regions of Greater Syria (Syria, Palestine, Lebanon and Jordan).

"The Golan aroused the interest of European explorers in the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. The most eminent travellers who visited the Golan and documented some of the visible archaeological sites scattered throughout its territory were U. J. Seetzen in 1806, J. L. Burckhardt (Sheikh Ibrahim) in 1810, J. Buckingham in 1816, L. Oliphant in 1879 and the German engineer G. Schumacher in 1883.

"The archaeological finds that are preserved in the National Museum in Damascus and at the Department of Antiquities in Quneitra show that the Golan was continuously inhabited and developed by the same peoples who lived in the natural regions of Greater Syria, such as the Natufians, followed by Amorites, Canaanites, Aramaeans, Nabataeans, Ituraeans, Ghassanids and other Arab tribes. The Golan also played an important role in Arab Islamic history. Its plains around the Yarmouk witnessed the first violent battles against the Byzantines, following which the Muslim Arabs were able to conquer Syria and subsequently the other neighbouring countries. In addition, the Golan played a prominent role during the struggle against the crusaders, the Ottoman occupation and the French mandate over Syria.

"From this evidence, it can be concluded that one of the principal characteristics of the Golan is that it constitutes a connecting link between the civilizations of northern and southern Syria and, historically, is associated with the successive civilizations of the Syrian motherland which covered the entire geographical area of the Golan.

"Archaeological exploration in the governorate of Quneitra (Golan)

"Since only limited casual archaeological excavations have been carried out in the Golan, most of the available data are derived from the results of superficial archaeological surveys. The most important of these were probably those carried out in 1880 by the explorer Schumacher who published the results of his work in his book entitled *The Golan* and subsequently in his second book entitled *Transjordan*. Schumacher also drew up the first detailed archaeological map of the Golan. Although he did not engage in systematic archaeological excavations in the true sense of the term, he documented, described and sketched the archaeological sites, ruins and relics that he visited during his field trips and, therefore, the information recorded by Schumacher still constitutes the basic source of our knowledge concerning the Golan.

"Following the setback on 5 June 1967, the Zionist occupation authorities, represented by archaeological and university departments, carried out intensive archaeological exploration, survey and excavation operations for which a large number of archaeologists in various fields of specialization were mobilized in an attempt to discover tangible evidence proving that the Golan was the land of Bashan, Maacah and Geshur mentioned in the books of the Old Testament and, consequently, to justify the occupation and annexation of the territory. Did the Zionist State discover such evidence? The answer is no, as will be seen from the following pages based on the results published by archaeological departments in the Zionist entity.

"From Schumacher's time (1880) to the present day, a total of 209 archaeological sites from various historical periods have been discovered. These sites, listed in historical sequence, include: 15 sites containing relics from the latter part of the middle Bronze Age (2000-1500 BC); only 6 sites containing relics from the late Bronze Age (1500-1200 BC); 4 sites containing archaeological remains from the Hellenic period in the time of Alexander the Great and his successors (fourth to first centuries BC); 98 sites containing relics from the Roman (first century BC to fourth century AD) and Byzantine (fourth to seventh centuries AD) periods; and 72 sites dating from the Arab Islamic periods (seventh to nineteenth centuries AD).

"The most noteworthy aspect in this regard is the total absence of relics from the Iron Age (1200-500 BC), during which the Israelites left Egypt and settled in Palestine in the time of Moses. It was the age in which David established his kingdom (about 1000 BC) and in which the kingdom of Solomon flourished (about 900 BC). There is also a lack of relics from the period of the Persian occupation of Syria during the fifth and fourth centuries BC, which was the period in which the Jews returned from the Babylonian captivity.

"This means that the periods from which material relics have been found in the Golan are the Byzantine period (98 sites) and the Arab Islamic periods (72 sites).

"The archaeological sites that have been explored or excavated are: al-Ghajar; Tal al-Hamra; Khirbat al-Duweir; Jubbata al-Zeit; Sahita; Nakhila; Ain Qunya; Tal al-Azariya; Khirab al-Sawada; Ain Fit; Khirbat Ra'abana; Za'oura; al-Hamidiya; Sumaqa; al-Hajf; Bab al-Hawa or Tal al-Gharam; Mansoura; Khirbat al-Makhfi; Khirbat al-Fureish; al-Luhayat or Kharjiyat; Ain al-Harra; al-Qala'; Qatrana; Sukeik; al-Fawqa; Khirab al-Maghabir; al-Husseiniya; Qafira; Baidaris; al-Ghassaniya; Wasit; al-Quneitra; al-Bajja; al-Adnaniya; Surman; Kafr Naffakh; Khuweija; Anja'a; Ain al-'Alq; Dalhamiya; Dabboura; 'Uleiqa; Tal Ukkasha; al-Ramthaniya; al-Danqala; Ghadiriya; Northern 'Uweinat; Deir Sirdas; Southern 'Uweinat; Na'ran; al-Dahsha; Ain Simsim; Sheikh Marzouq; al-Dabiya; Tal al-Mithaniya; Ghadir al-Nuhas; Sanabir; Fakhoura; Ahmadiya; Amoudiya; Salouqiya; Ain al-Awra; al-Manshiya; al-Sur; Khashina; Abu Fula; al-Dawra; Qasrain; Tannouriya; Faraj; Rafid; Isha; Tal al-Faras; Seir al-Khirfan; al-Majami'; Ya'rubiya; Deir Mufaddal; Jiraba; Butmiya; Durr Dara; Tal al-Bazouk; Rajm al-Hawa; Qubbat Qar'a; Umm Khashaba; Hazzan; al-Tal; Shabba; Tal al-Jukhdar; Rasm Bab al-Hawa; Ain Hamoud; Mazra'at Kanaf; Khukha; Jarnaya; Mazra'at al-Quneitra; Jarniya; Kariz al-Wadi; Shaqif; Matsarqawi; Khirbat al-Majdouliya; Bajouriya;

Tal al-Saqi; Kafr 'Uqb; Deir Aziz; al-Qasabiya; al-Safira; al-Saghira; Khisfin; Ain al-Safira; Umm al-Qanatir; Lawiya; al-Sabahiya; Umrat al-Firanj; al-Mintar; Sheikh Khidr; Tal Abu al-Zeitoun; Khirbat al-Majahiya; Adisa; Khirbat Dajajiya; al-Al; Shakoum; Bir al-Shaqoum; Suqoufiya; Tal Abu Mudawwar; al-Bardawil (Qasr Bardawil); Khirbat Ta'ina; Rajm Zaki (Rajm Zanki); Rasm al-Yaqousa; Kafr Harib; al-Yaqousa; Jibin; Dawr al-Lowz; Fiq; Hathil; Khirbat Sihan; Rajm Fiq; al-Uyoun (Khirbat Uyoun); al-'Iyada; al-Nasiriya; Khan al-Ahmar; Khirbat Tawafiq; al-Fawqa; Khan al-Aqaba, Talil; Sa'id; Ain Sa'id; Ain Umm al-Adam; al-Safouriya; al-Dabbousiya; Khirbat al-Duweir; Tal al-Thurayya.

"Israeli acts of aggression against antiquities in the Golan

"Following the aggression on 5 June 1967 and the occupation of the Golan by Israeli forces, Israeli archaeologists embarked on the task of justifying the occupation and committed repeated acts of aggression against Syrian Arab cultural property in the Golan, which constitutes the south-western region of the Syrian Arab Republic, in total disregard of the international conventions that prohibit such illegal acts in occupied territory. They conducted surveys and excavations and committed many acts of devastation in the occupied territory, causing tremendous damage to its antiquities. They relied initially on the surveys of the early explorers, particularly those of Schumacher, and subsequently extended their operations to cover the entire occupied territory, and these acts of aggression against our cultural heritage are still continuing with a view to falsifying irrefutable facts and seeking untenable justifications for the ongoing aggression and for what they claim to be a 'historic right' to the so-called 'promised land'.

"The basic aims of the Israeli acts of aggression against the antiquities in the Golan

"All the archaeological activities in which the Israelis have engaged, sometimes in association with foreigners, in the occupied territories, including the Golan, are based on unfounded racist theories derived from the Torah which are totally incompatible with the actual facts. These theories, which are particularly hostile to the Arabs, are completely alien to the objective science of archaeology. The aims of these acts of aggression are, inter alia:

- To promote racist and expansionist political theories and Torah-based ideology that allegedly give the Jews exclusive rights and link the history of the Golan to events recorded in the Torah, and to deliberately suppress any evidence that contradicts those theories and concepts;
- To emphasize the Jewish presence in the Golan, particularly during the period of the alleged Jewish kingdoms in the first millennium BC; to exaggerate the extent of that presence in subsequent ages in order to attribute to the Jews a special role in the territory that would justify their aggression and expansion on the basis of erroneous interpretations that are belied by the facts established in the light of archaeological discoveries; and, subsequently, to attempt to rewrite the history of the territory from a racist standpoint;
- To disregard, and even attempt to obliterate, the principal archaeological sites, strata and discoveries in the Golan, and particularly antiquities dating from the Arab Islamic periods which cannot be attributed to the Jews;
- To cast doubt on the historical and cultural identity of the Arabs in an attempt to prove the expansionist theory of the originators of the Zionist movement ('A land with a people for a people without a land') in order to deny the Arab presence and, thereby, justify the establishment of the Zionist entity and its expansionist activities.

"Israeli aggressive practices in the Golan

"The aggressive practices of the Israeli occupation authorities have assumed numerous forms, including all types of archaeological surveys, investigations, explorations and excavations, the removal and analysis of specimens and the theft, defacement and

destruction of movable and immovable cultural property by civilian and military bodies in and outside Israel.

"These Israeli acts of aggression are illustrated by the following measures and activities:

- Following the aggression on 5 June 1967 and during the October 1973 war, the Israeli army demolished most of the villages in the Golan, obliterated their traditional and archaeological features and used the basalt stones from which they were built to construct military fortifications.
- The Israeli army has turned many of the archaeological sites occupying strategic positions in the Golan into areas for training and target practice with various types of weapons and have even turned some of them into military emplacements, as happened in the case of the unique temple on Jabal al-Sheikh, which dates from the first millennium BC, as well as Tal Abu al-Nada and the sites around Quneitra, al-Qahtaniya, al-Adnaniya, Ufaniya, al-Kawm and al-Hamidiya.
- Israeli army officers and other military personnel have carried out clandestine excavations at archaeological sites from which they have stolen antiquities for subsequent sale.
- Israeli archaeological teams have carried out surveys and excavations at many sites in the Golan and have removed any antiquities that they discovered there to Israeli museums.
- Those teams have made every possible endeavour to distort the history of the ancient and Islamic Arab peoples who inhabited the Golan by selectively highlighting the antiquities that further their aim of writing a spurious history of the territory in a manner conducive to their interests.

"The occupation authorities have transferred many of the antiquities to their museums, claiming them to be relics from Jewish sites and concealing the fact that they are Arab antiquities. For example:

- The archaeological area of Deir al-Quruh in the central Golan contains Christian Arab antiquities dating from the fourth and fifth centuries AD which the occupation authorities have attributed to so-called Jewish sites, giving the area the Hebrew name of Gamla.
- The area of Beit Siwar in the Batiha plain is an ancient Arab archaeological site which was a flourishing village in the days of Christ, three of whose disciples (Philip, Peter and his brother Andrew) came from there. Although the site contains Christian religious buildings and ordinary dwellings, Zionist propaganda falsely designates it as a Jewish site.

"The parties that have participated in acts of aggression against antiquities in the Golan

"The numerous Israeli and foreign parties that have participated in acts of aggression against antiquities in the Golan include, in particular:

- Israeli army;
- Israeli Ministry of Education and Culture;
- Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture, New York;
- Golan Research Institute, Israel;
- The local council at Katzrin in the occupied Golan;
- The Hebrew University, Israel;
- Israeli Kibbutz secretariat;
- Research Department of the Kibbutz movement, Israel;
- National Council for Research and Development, Israel;
- Bar-Ilan University, Israel;
- Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology, Hebrew Union College, Jerusalem;

- Palestine Exploration Fund, London;
- Leonard and Katherine Woolley Fund, Somerville College, Oxford;
- Thames and Hudson Company;
- Athens University.

"Antiquities stolen by Israelis in the Golan

"The heavy equipment of the Israeli army and the pickaxes of dozens of Israeli expeditions have disembowelled hundreds of Syrian Arab archaeological mounds and sites stretching from the summits and slopes of Jabal al-Sheikh in the north to the area of Quneitra and even the banks of the Yarmouk river and the al-Hamma area in the southern and south-western parts of the Golan.

"The principal archaeological sites which have been subjected to Israeli devastation include: Banias, Dabboura, Quneitra, al-Ghassaniya, al-Adnaniya, al-Qahtaniya, Ain Nashout, Ain Simsim, al-Fakhoura, al-Qasabiya, al-Asaliya, al-Batiha, al-Ahmadiya, Jiraba, Zeita, al-Qadiriya, Umm al-Qanatir, al-Dakka, Kanaf, Deir Quruh, al-Majihiya, al-Ya'rubiya, Fiq, Khisfin, al-Al, al-Hamma, Rajm al-Hawa, Deir Sirdas, al-Jawiza, al-Khashiniya, al-Ramthaniya, Dabiya, al-Faraj, al-Rafid, Kafr al-Ma, Sukoufiya, al-Kursi, Qal'at al-Hisn, Qal'at Nimrod, Juba, Musahhira, Kafr Nasij and many other archaeological sites.

NB: Al-Hamidiya, Hadhar, Quneitra, al-Rafid and al-Qasabiya are sites that have been liberated.

"L. The policy of repression, blockade and detention of the population

"The Israelis are continuing their murderous criminal practices of torture, coercion, deprivation, detention, imprisonment and restricted residence against the Syrian Arab population of the occupied Golan and have not hesitated to use barbaric methods of torture, such as whipping, electric shocks, ripping out of fingernails and toenails and deprivation of food and water, which are rejected by the international community and condemned by the Geneva Conventions and United Nations principles and human rights instruments.

"There is not a single household or family in the occupied Syrian Golan one of whose members is not incarcerated in an Israeli prison or detention centre and suffering from various types of torture and denial of basic human rights, such as the right to life and the right to contact one's family.

"The principal features of this repression, which is a firmly established component of Israeli policy in the Golan and the other occupied Arab territories, include detention, imprisonment and restricted residence, to which the whole population is liable and to which thousands (approximately one quarter of the population) have actually been subjected. It is a rare occurrence anywhere in the world for one quarter of a people living under occupation to be subjected to detention and imprisonment. The names of some of the Syrian residents of the Golan who have been imprisoned by the occupation authorities are listed below.

"The ongoing detentions of citizens are illustrated by the following:

"On 5 November 2000, a resident of the village of Mas'ada was detained for carrying Palestinians in his vehicle.

"On 20 December 2000, the enemy authorities detained a young man, Burhan Muhammad al-Qadhmani from Majdal Shams, on the charge of possessing a weapon and, several months later, he was sentenced by the court at Safad to a fixed term of 15 months' imprisonment on that charge.

"On 28 December 2000, the enemy authorities detained a young man, Sadiq al-Qadhmani from Majdal Shams, after occupation forces carried out a barbaric raid on his home.

"On 24 January 2001, the occupation authorities detained the young men Daniel Nasib Abu Zeid, Adham Anis Abu Zeid and Radhi Suf Abu Zeid and, on the same day, the young detainee Muhammad Salih As'ad Abu Salih was sentenced to a term of one year and four months' imprisonment on the charge of attempting to run over an Israeli soldier with his vehicle.

	Full name	*Age*	*Length of sentence*	*Period served*	*Period remaining*
1.	Hayel Hussein Hamad Abu Zeid	33 years	27 years	16 years	11 years
2.	Bishr Suleiman Ahmad al-Maqt	36 years	27 years	16 years	11 years
3.	Sidqi Suleiman Ahmad al-Maqt	34 years	27 years	16 years	11 years
4.	Asim Mahmoud As'ad al-Wali	34 years	27 years	16 years	11 years
5.	Sitan Nimr al-Wali	35 years	27 years	16 years	11 years
6.	Amal Hamad Selim Uweidat	25 years	7 1/2 years	4 years	3 1/2 years
7.	Yasir Hussein Youssuf Khanjar	24 years	7 1/2 years	4 years	3 1/2 years
8.	Ridhwan Jamil As'ad al-Jawhari	25 years	4 1/2 years	3 years	1 1/2 years
9.	Wi'am Mahmoud Salman Ammasha	19 years	5 years	1 1/2 years	3 1/2 years
10.	Wa'il Najib Zahwa	17 years	2 years	1 1/2 years	6 months
11.	Muhammad Salih As'ad Abu Salih	22 years	1 year and 4 months	7 months	9 months
12.	Hisham Kamal Selim Shams	19 years	1 1/2 years	16 months	2 months
13.	Burhan Muhammad al-Qadhmani	18 years	15 months	4 months	11 months

"These prisoners, who are suffering from the most deplorable conditions of detention which are incompatible with the most fundamental humanitarian standards, have embarked, to no avail, on a number of hunger strikes in support of their demands for an improvement in their conditions of detention and imprisonment. For example, the hunger strike that they ended on 1 June 2000 formed part of a general hunger strike by all the Arab detainees in Israeli prisons.

"On 5 September 2000, as part of their arbitrary repressive campaigns against our people in the occupied Golan, Israeli occupation forces sent four young Syrian Arabs for trial on the trumped-up charge of attempting to run over an Israeli soldier who was standing at a military transport collection point. The names of these young men are:

- Samir Suleiman Tarif, 20, from Majdal Shams;
- Fadi Adnan Mahmoud, 21, from Majdal Shams;
- Anan Sami al-Mar'ei, 13, from Majdal Shams;
- Muhammad Salih As'ad Abu Salih, 21, from Mas'ada.

"At a press conference held on 12 September 2000, Major General Alik Ron, the Israeli Northern District Police Commander, admitted that this campaign of detentions had taken place.

"At 8.30 p.m. on 14 April 2001, Israeli military patrols directed their searchlights, and also fired a number of shots, at a Syrian police post in sector 7 of the United Nations positions.

"The families of detainees in the Golan hold numerous demonstrations and sit-ins as an expression of solidarity with their detained family members, particularly on the occasion of the annual day of solidarity on 21 April in which many residents of the Golan, as well as Palestinian Arabs, participate. One of the most recent mass sit-ins took place on 21 April 2001 at Majdal Shams in front of the office of the

International Committee of the Red Cross and was supported by another simultaneous gathering expressing solidarity at Damascus. A few days earlier, on 15 April 2001, the Syrian Arab citizens in the occupied Golan participated in a demonstration organized by the Palestinian Jerusalem Youth Federation to express their solidarity with, and support for, the Arab detainees in Israeli prisons and to commemorate the legitimate national cause for which they were imprisoned, namely resistance to the occupation.

"The inhuman policy of repression which the Israeli occupation authorities are pursuing against Syrian Arab citizens in the occupied Golan is further illustrated by the fact that they are prevented from visiting their Syrian motherland to see their families and relatives. At the present time, the only alternative is for them to go to Jordan to meet their relatives from Damascus and other Syrian regions, with all the hardship and exorbitant financial costs that this entails. Moreover, approval for residents of the occupied Golan to travel to Jordan is subject to the whims of the occupation authorities, who use such approval as a means of pressure to extort taxes and other large amounts of money from them. The following are some examples of persons who were prevented from travelling:

- The occupation authorities prohibited a delegation of citizens from the occupied Golan from travelling to Damascus to present their condolences on the occasion of the death of the late President Hafez al-Assad. The vociferous demonstration that our citizens held at the Quneitra crossing point on 12 June 2000 in protest at that prohibition was reported in the information media.

- On 25 October 2000, the occupation authorities prohibited a delegation of our citizens from the Golan from travelling to the town of Ramallah in the West Bank to visit persons injured in the intifada.

- On 1 March 2001, the occupation authorities refused to permit a delegation from the Golan to come to Damascus to take part in the Farmers Congress. They also refused to allow another delegation of physicians from the Golan to attend a Dental Congress at Damascus. In fact, the only residents of the Golan whom the occupation authorities allow to come to Damascus are ministers of religion, who are permitted to attend religious gatherings once a year, and students studying at Damascus University, whose travel authorizations are subject to Israeli extortion which is rejected by our citizens in the Golan since they are forced to pay exorbitant fees, amounting to about $50, in respect of each application. The odious and inhuman practices of the occupation authorities are also illustrated by the fact that, on 7 January 2001, the abundant rainfall exposed a graveyard at the Banat Ya'qoub bridge in the western part of the Golan which contained the bodies of Syrian and other Arab citizens and soldiers who had been buried in a shameful manner. This was revealed by the London-based *Al-Wasat* magazine in a lengthy article published at the time.

- The population of the occupied Golan are likewise prohibited from developing, or building on, their land. The occupation authorities carry out an annual aerial land survey to look for any change or expansion, in the event of which taxes and fines are imposed. Agricultural land is also carefully surveyed and, if any forest plants are found thereon, this is regarded as proof that the land is not privately owned and, consequently, can be seized from its owners and expropriated by the so-called Nature and National Parks Protection Authority. The many burdensome taxes that are imposed on agricultural land include taxes on water, and even on rainwater, the use of which by farmers is severely obstructed in so far as anyone wishing to build a water cistern is required to pay a licence fee equivalent to more than $2,000. When the occupation authorities established a water supply network to irrigate settlement land, the residents of the Golan established a corresponding network at their own expense. However, the occupation authorities, having expropriated the water

resources, which they are pumping to the settlements, sell to the Syrian Arab population their own water, including the water from Lake Mas'ada, which is the largest natural water reservoir in the occupied Golan. While abundant water is supplied to the Israeli settlements, which irrigate their crops every week or every few days, the Syrian Arab population are able to irrigate, with an inadequate quantity of water, only once every 25 days or so in the summer season. The occupation authorities also prevent herders from watering their livestock from the lake, thereby forcing them to purchase water for that purpose.

"M. Resistance to the occupation

"Neither the policy of occupation and settlement nor the policy of prevarication and procrastination or the policy of repression and torture have discouraged our valiant people in the occupied Golan from confronting and opposing the occupation; in fact, those policies have strengthened our people's resolve and made them even more attached to their land, their nation and their identity and even more eager to proclaim their loyalty to the Syrian Arab Republic and their belief that the dark hours of the occupation will inevitably be dispelled by the dawn of liberation and reintegration in their nation. Our people in the Golan have resisted the attempts to impose Israeli citizenship on them and have confronted and opposed the heavily armed occupation forces with the strength and faith inherent in persons defending their rights. Those attempts provoked a large-scale uprising by our people which lasted for five months from 14 February to the end of June 1982, during which violent clashes and angry confrontations took place and our people emphasized to the whole world that they were Syrians and would remain Syrians as long as they lived.

"From time to time, the occupation authorities prosecute young men and incarcerate them in prisons and detention centres, merely for expressing their attachment to the Syrian Arab Republic, with a view to terrorizing the Golanis as a whole and suppressing their national feelings. However, it is common knowledge that our people celebrate all of the Syrian Arab Republic's national events, constantly affirm their national identity and reject the Zionist occupation. The most recent action taken in this regard was their boycott of the members of Lahad's hireling militia whom Israel, fearing the wrath of the Lebanese, relocated to a settlement in the Golan.

- On 3 October 2000, violent clashes broke out between Israeli occupation forces and our people in the occupied Golan who were protesting at the manner in which the occupation forces were targeting young Palestinians during the confrontations taking place in occupied Palestine. The population of the Golan gathered in the centre of the village of Majdal Shams where they held a demonstration and threw stones at Israeli troops in protest at the barbaric massacres which the occupation forces were committing against unarmed Palestinian civilians and Islamic holy places.

- On 14 December 2000, our people in the occupied Syrian Golan proclaimed a general strike, which was observed in all the social, commercial and agricultural sectors and also by schoolchildren in the villages of Mas'ada, Majdal Shams, Buq'ata and Ain al-Tineh, as an expression of their steadfast stand against the occupation and their resolve to preserve their Syrian Arab national identity and to continue the national liberation campaign until the Golan is freed from every taint of Israeli occupation.

- On 20 December 2000, during a demonstration that they organized on the anniversary of Israel's annexation of the Golan on 14 December 1981, about 50 students from the occupied Golan attending Damascus University delivered a letter to the United Nations office at Damascus in which they emphasized the dangers inherent in Israel's recent activities involving the burial of toxic waste in the villages of the occupied Syrian Golan. In their letter, addressed to Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, they called upon him and all international organizations

and institutions concerned with human rights and environmental safety not only to take rapid and effective action to save them from certain death at the hands of Israel in their occupied villages but also to send an international commission to investigate the facts and expose Israeli practices as soon as possible. The demonstrators also called upon the United Nations to intervene to secure the release of 17 Syrian detainees from the Golan who were being subjected to repression and torture in Zionist detention centres.

- On 14 February 2001, a general strike was proclaimed throughout the occupied Golan and the villages of Majdal Shams, Buq'ata, Mas'ada, Ain Qunya and al-Ghajar witnessed mass demonstrations on the occasion of the nineteenth anniversary of the open-ended general strike which our people in the occupied Golan proclaimed in 1982 as an expression of their rejection of the Israeli occupation authorities' decision to annex the Golan and impose Israeli identity on its population.

- Our people in the occupied Syrian Golan also demonstrated on 21 April 2001, demanding the release of all the Arab detainees whom Israel was holding, without charge, in its prisons and detention centres in flagrant violation of all international conventions and customs. The demonstrators, from all the villages of the occupied Golan, who gathered in the village of Majdal Shams on the occasion of Arab Prisoner's Day, waved Syrian, Lebanese and Palestinian flags and affirmed their absolute loyalty to their Syrian motherland and their determination to continue their struggle and resistance until the last inch of occupied Arab land had been liberated.

- On 24 April, which has been designated as Syrian Arab Prisoners' Day, the Committee for the Support of Syrian Prisoners in the Occupied Syrian Golan and Occupied Palestine organized a sit-in in front of the office of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations office at Damascus in solidarity with the prisoners from the Golan in Zionist occupation prisons. The demonstrators waved photographs of the Syrian prisoners in occupation jails, as well as banners calling upon the international community to intervene to secure the release of the Syrian and other Arab detainees in Israeli occupation prisons.

"The numerous Arab and international declarations calling upon Israel to withdraw from the occupied Syrian Golan are illustrated by the following:

"The Arab parliamentary delegations participating in the one hundred and fifth session of the Inter-Parliamentary Union held at Havana in early April 2001 issued a declaration emphasizing their support and backing for the Al-Aqsa Intifada, calling for condemnation of the aggressive terrorist practices of the Israeli forces and urging the international community to bring pressure to bear on Israel to comply with the United Nations resolutions, to withdraw fully, to the 4 June 1967 line, from the occupied Syrian Golan and the other occupied territories in southern Lebanon and the occupied Palestinian territory and to acknowledge the right of the Palestinian people to return, to exercise self-determination and to establish their independent State with Holy Jerusalem as its capital.

"On 11 July 2001, François Rivasseau, a spokesman for the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stressed the need for the occupied Syrian Golan to be restored fully to Syrian sovereignty so that a just and comprehensive peace could be achieved on the basis of the resolutions of the Security Council and the principle of land for peace. In his statement, he said that France's position in this regard was well known and unequivocal. He criticized the statements made two days earlier by Ariel Sharon, the Israeli Prime Minister, concerning the occupied Syrian Golan, in which he had said that the occupation of the Golan was one of the finest achievements and successes in the history of Zionism.

"On 12 July 2001, Amr Moussa, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, said that the Arabs, the Arab League and its Secretary-General could not but reject the words and acts of

Ariel Sharon, the Israeli Prime Minister, and particularly his statements concerning settlement in the Golan and its retention under occupation.

"On 18 July 2001, at its emergency meeting held in Cairo, the Follow-up and Action Committee established at the Arab Summit confirmed that the Golan was Syrian Arab territory from which Israel should withdraw to the 4 June 1967 line in accordance with United Nations resolutions and characterized the Israeli Prime Minister's statements encouraging settlement in the Golan as a flagrant violation of the Charter and resolutions of the United Nations, of the principles of international law and of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, under which settlement was regarded as a war crime. The Committee also emphasized that the Shabaa farms were occupied Lebanese territory from which Israel must withdraw in order to comply fully with Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

"The General Assembly in its resolution 55/51 of 1 December 2000, entitled 'The Syrian Golan', reaffirming the fundamental principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations, declared that Israel had failed so far to comply with Security Council resolution 497 (1981), also declared that the Israeli decision of 14 December 1981 to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan was null and void and had no validity whatsoever, as confirmed by the Security Council in its resolution 497 (1981), and called upon Israel to rescind it.

"In its resolution 55/209 of 20 December 2000, entitled 'Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources', the General Assembly reaffirming the principle of the permanent sovereignty of peoples under foreign occupation over their natural resources, called upon Israel, the occupying Power, not to exploit, to cause loss or depletion of or to endanger the natural resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan.

"The twenty-eighth session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held at Bamako in June 2001, in its resolution 3/28-P on the occupied Syrian Golan, emphasized that the establishment of settlements and the encouragement of settlers to move to the occupied Syrian Golan constituted a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. The Conference condemned Israel for failing to comply with Security Council resolution 497 (1981), for continuing to alter the legal status and demographic composition of the occupied Syrian Golan and for attempting to impose Israeli citizenship, identity and identity cards on Syrian Arab citizens. The resolution also confirmed the right of the Syrian Arab Republic to recover its full sovereignty over the occupied Golan."

VI. Conclusions

Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem

95. As section IV above shows, the information provided to the Special Committee, by knowledgeable persons whose credibility the Special Committee has found no reason to question, has led the Special Committee to the conclusion that: the considerable and extensive controls placed over the Palestinians in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem by the occupying authority, and the severe measures taken by the occupying authority in the enforcement of such controls, appear to be generally dismissive of human rights and oppressive of the Palestinians.

96. The considerable and extensive controls themselves and the very severe manner in which such controls have been enforced are, in the view of the Special Committee, totally inconsistent with generally accepted human rights standards and obligations. Such controls and methods of enforcement are also, in the view of the Special Committee, in breach of a number of provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

97. Confrontations between the occupying authority and the Palestinians, the escalating violence, the death and injury caused to both Palestinians and Israelis, the greatly disproportionate force used by the occupying authority, resulting in far greater losses to the Palestinians, have had the most devastating

consequences in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

98. The occupation of, and the circumstances prevailing in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem since 29 September 2000 are not conducive to the recognition and observance of human rights.

99. It is unquestionable that, on the part of Israelis and Palestinians alike, there is a yearning for peace.

100. Yet for peace to be achieved, it is imperative that there be a return to the peace process.

101. Until such time as the peace process is satisfactorily concluded, the human rights of the Palestinians of the occupied territories must, of course, be fully recognized and fully honoured by the occupying authority.

102. Most regrettably, the only conclusion that now seems possible, from statements made and materials provided to the Special Committee, is that the human rights of the Palestinians in the occupied territories are being harshly ignored.

Occupied Syrian Golan

103. The occupied Syrian Golan has not had the confrontations and the violence that Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem have experienced over the past year.

104. Yet the problems of the occupied Syrian Golan, described in earlier reports of the Special Committee, continue undiminished. There are the problems of preserving the national identity of persons who have been under occupation for such a long period of time; expansion and increase in Israeli settlements and the privileged position of the settlers; the difficult circumstances of Syrians of the occupied Golan who are an agricultural people; and the personal tragedies that afflict families divided because of the occupation of the Syrian Golan.

Notes

[1] General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

[2] See General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

[3] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

[4] Ibid., No. 972.

[5] Ibid., vol. 249, No. 3511.

[6] Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *The Hague Conventions and Declarations of 1899 and 1907*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1915.